

The Essential Teachings  
of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

TRANSCENDENTAL  
**MEDITATION**

The classic text revised and updated

*"I love Transcendental Meditation! I've been practicing it twice a day for almost 40 years. When you read this wonderful book by Jack Forem, you'll understand why it means so much to me."*

— **David Lynch**, filmmaker, author, and artist

**JACK FOREM**

## **Praise for *Transcendental Meditation***

*“In the ongoing transmission of India’s practical wisdom to the West, nothing has had a bigger impact than Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his Transcendental Meditation. This engaging and comprehensive update of Jack Forem’s seminal book is well timed, as the knowledge it contains is vital in our stressed-out, plugged-in era.”*

— **Philip Goldberg**, author of *American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation, How Indian Spirituality Changed the West*

*“Jack Forem’s groundbreaking book, **Transcendental Meditation**, inspired thousands of people, including myself, to learn meditation and investigate the scientific basis behind its effectiveness. In this new edition, he brilliantly distills all the latest advancements and hundreds of scientific papers published in leading academic and medical journals. As Maharishi himself said about the original edition, this book ‘offers a clear, comprehensive, and thoughtful presentation of the essence of our teaching,’ and that is certainly true of this new edition as well. I strongly encourage everyone to read this book and to take full advantage of the programs it describes. It is an invaluable resource for all who desire a bright future for themselves and for our world.”*

— **John Hagelin**, Quantum Physicist and Educator  
President, Global Union of Scientists for Peace  
Featured in *What the Bleep Do We Know!?* and *The Secret*

*“A comprehensive, reader-friendly study of the teachings of a great modern master. Jack Forem’s book isn’t just about the TM technique and its massive body of scientific research, but it reveals practical and enlightened approaches to the fields of education, health care, personal relationships, psychology, religion, and business, and a novel and powerful strategy for achieving world peace. Informative and inspiring!”*

— **James S. Brooks, M.D.**, co-author of *Ayurvedic Secrets to Longevity & Total Health*, Medical Director of Mental Health Centers in Chariton and Fairfield, Iowa

*“As a rabbi and longtime practitioner of the TM program, I particularly appreciate the new chapter on Religion and Spirituality in Jack Forem’s book. Jack quotes Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s teaching that religions have ‘one common ground: that the light of God is kindled in each heart.’ This is what TM accomplished for me in my life. I never would have desired to become, nor would I have been able to succeed as a rabbi, without the spiritual awareness that the practice of TM awakened in me.”*

— **Alan Green**, Senior Rabbi, Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, Winnipeg, Canada

*“Many books have been written about the Transcendental Meditation technique and the array of benefits enjoyed by those who practice it. Jack Forem’s book stands out not only because it is eminently readable and entertaining, but because it is such a clear and comprehensive introduction to TM, the principles behind it, and the research demonstrating its effectiveness. It’s a joy to read and a breath of fresh air.”*

*“In addition to delineating the value of TM for individuals, Forem explains cutting-edge, paradigm-shifting research showing that groups of people practicing TM together have significantly reduced tension and hostility in the environment. He argues persuasively that in TM, we have a technique to benefit the individual and at the same time generate harmony and reduce stress in society as a whole. “This is a book to read and take to heart.”*

— **Gary P. Kaplan M.D., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Neurology,  
Hofstra University School of Medicine

*“Jack Forem’s new book on Transcendental Meditation offers a wealth of research with real-world examples of how TM can increase personal and corporate success and effectiveness. This book offers numerous examples of how this simple technique has had a tremendous effect on people from all walks of life. I know it has helped me, my family, my company, and my clients.”*

— **Nancy Slomowitz**, President & CEO, Executive Management Associates, Inc., author of *Work Zone Madness! Surviving and Rising Above Workplace Dysfunction*

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## PREFACE

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Transcendental Meditation and the essential teachings and technologies for the development of consciousness brought to the world by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi provide a direct path for anyone, in any time or place, to grow in happiness, creativity, dynamism, vibrant good health, and a deep sense of inner peace, regardless of the circumstances of one's life. They not only offer profound levels of individual fulfillment, they also bring warmth and love to relationships, promote harmony and healing in the social and natural environment, and contribute to a peaceful world.

This is the message Maharishi delivered when I first heard him speak in November of 1966. It resonated deeply with me. I believed it, and I believed *in* it as a vision of possibilities worthy of achieving. His very being radiated an indefinable something, an authenticity and gentle authority that inspired confidence in the truth of his words.

The first version of this book was published eight years later, after I learned Transcendental Meditation (TM), trained in India to teach it, and did extensive research on its results and benefits. It was my first book, and I was grateful and happy that it enjoyed substantial success in the United States and in various editions around the world. Now, a lifetime later, based on more than 40 years of personal experience with Maharishi's teachings and conversations and interviews with hundreds of people, I have revised and updated it, taking into consideration, among other things, a mountain of scientific

research that continues to verify the deep truth, logical beauty, and universal effectiveness of Maharishi's teachings.

### *ABOUT THIS NEW EDITION*

Readers of the original edition may wonder if there's anything here of value for them. At the risk of self-promotion—something I may be the last living American to find abhorrent—I have to say that this revised version is essentially a new book. In reviewing the scientific research published since the first edition, interviewing people about the benefits they've enjoyed from practicing TM, and trying to select only the most important of the many programs throughout the world utilizing this practice, I realized that much of the previous material would have to give way to the new. Here are the main ways in which this book has evolved:

**New Knowledge.** When the original edition was published, the Transcendental Meditation technique comprised Maharishi's entire teaching. Since then, he unveiled new programs and initiatives for health promotion, personal development, sustainable living, global-peace creation, and much more, which I will describe and explain.

**Research.** When I wrote the initial version of the book, only a handful of scientific studies on TM had been published. Now, more than 350 research papers on TM have appeared in top-level scientific journals on psychology, physiology, health, and social change. You will find many (but I promise, not all!) of these papers briefly reviewed here, in terms of the benefits they have uncovered for individuals and society.

**Long-Term Personal Growth.** The original edition contained interviews and testimonials mostly from students and other young people who'd been meditating a relatively short time—from a few months to about five years. Now there are many thousands of people who have been meditating for *decades*. What have they experienced? How have they grown? How has meditation helped them deal with life's challenges as they've grown older? You will find answers to such questions within these pages, along with new observations from people young and not-so young about the value they have found in TM in today's world.

**Global Expansion.** The first version of the book focused almost exclusively on the United States and almost entirely on benefits for the individual. Now TM is taught in schools, prisons, corporate offices, and industrial plants around the world. Special programs in Veterans Administration hospitals are teaching TM to soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and there are meditation classes for kids with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), as well as “at-risk” kids from high-stress neighborhoods. These programs are *everywhere*, from the mountaintops of Peru and the plains of India to Native American reservations. TM is taught to people throughout North and South America as well as Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Middle East, in Bali, Ecuador, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Brazil, South Africa, Uganda, India, Australia, New Zealand, in over 100 countries.

**Personal Experience of the Author.** In the first edition, I did my best to keep myself out of the story and just present the knowledge and research on TM as clearly and objectively as I could. However, over the years, many people have told me

that they particularly enjoyed those parts of the book where I related my own experiences with Maharishi, what it was like being around him and working with him. Thus, you'll find a little more of my story in these pages.



## A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Maharishi *always* used “he” and “man” in both speaking and writing, even where the more universal meaning of “humanity” was intended. I do not feel it would be appropriate to change that usage, especially in published materials, even though I am sensitive to how it may feel to female readers. I have taken a few liberties rephrasing my personal notes on his remarks to avoid those constructions.

In his teachings, Maharishi used a few terms in a special way, to convey meanings outside ordinary usage. I indicate this special usage by capitalizing the first letter of certain terms, for example, Nature, Natural Law, and Unified Field, among others.





## INTRODUCTION: MEETING MAHARISHI

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University of California, Berkeley—November 8, 1966.

A cold wind was rushing up from San Francisco Bay and climbing toward the hills. Huddling against the chill, I noticed some posters still up around campus as I hurried to enter California Hall. When I arrived, the talk had already begun. The large lecture hall was so packed that dozens of people overflowed into the corridor and, like them, I had to listen to the presentation over a loudspeaker.

The speaker's musical voice, with its slight Indian accent, was soft yet full of life, calm but extremely expressive. He was talking about life in contemporary society, noting that "as the rate of progress increases, as the pace of life becomes faster and man's aspirations expand to the moon and the stars, the responsibilities and pressures of life naturally become greater." But, he pointed out, our capabilities are not expanding at an equivalent rate. "Because people have not been able to find sufficient energy and creative intelligence within themselves to meet the demands of life ... frustration, unhappiness, and lack of fulfillment are increasingly common."

The speaker likened the situation to living in a building in which the walls have begun to crack. If the building is to continue to stand, the foundations have to be strengthened. He proposed the technique of Transcendental Meditation (TM) as

a way to restore balance, to give strength and dignity back to human life. He described TM as a simple method by which any individual could tap into the inner source of thought, a “reservoir of unlimited energy, intelligence, power, peace, and bliss” deep within the mind. When a person utilizes this field of unlimited potential, he said, “all aspects of his life flourish, in the same way that the branches, fruits, and leaves of a tree flourish when the roots maintain contact with the field of nourishment in the soil.”

Then he took his vision one step further, beyond the individual, and it was this final point that captured my full attention. When people meditate, he said, the deep inner peace they experience creates what he referred to as “a warm air” around them, an influence of harmony and positivity. If enough people in society produced such a harmonious atmosphere, negativity and stress in the environment could be reduced or even eliminated, and world peace could become a reality.

Even as a young man, I had never been nearly as interested in my own happiness as in the well-being of the world, and along with many others, I had done what I could to serve that cause, but clearly it wasn’t working. It was the late ’60s, there were riots in the streets of American cities, the Vietnam war was killing thousands of people and dividing the country, the Cold War was raging between the U.S. and the USSR (two nuclear-armed superpowers), crime rates were high, and nobody knew what to do about any of it. When I heard the speaker’s persuasive argument—which boiled down to the simple statement that individuals who are at peace within themselves create a peaceful world—it made complete sense to me.

It was a beautiful message, and the audience—even those of us standing in the corridor who had not been able to *see* the speaker—listened intently. After a while, a few people started to leave the hall, and I was finally able to get to the door and catch my first glimpse of His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, sitting cross-legged on the stage on a couch neatly draped with white silk.

Small in stature, with long dark hair and a beard just beginning to turn gray, wearing traditional white silk robes, the Maharishi moved and spoke with an extraordinary combination of gentleness and strength. His words were carefully chosen and his speech, although simple, was highly articulate. He had a quick and lively wit and a hearty laugh.


One thing was obvious: He was a happy man. Serene. At peace with himself and the world. He answered every question posed to him—some hostile, discourteous, provoking—with patience and answered thoughtfully and thoroughly. Here was a man who was sensitive to the suffering and confusion of modern life, who could understand it and explain it, yet somehow remain unfazed by it.

At one moment, while discussing a point of philosophy, his intellect seemed to dominate; his voice rose, his bright, clear eyes flashed, and his hands moved quickly and decisively. Answering a different question, he was the embodiment of love, his fingers caressing the petals of a rose, his voice soft and full. He seemed complete in himself, yet totally alert and responsive to those around him.

The Maharishi answered every question in terms of the technique of Transcendental Meditation. He outlined the

physiological effects of its practice, explained the principles behind it, and showed the relevance of the technique to whatever specific problems, individual, social, or global, concerned the questioner. He emphasized that he was not espousing philosophy or religion, or offering something to “believe in” or accept on faith. Rather, he said, TM is a practical technique, based on verifiable, scientifically validated principles. It is easy to learn, and has immediate and practical benefits for all aspects of life. And, although it was obvious that it was he who was bringing this message to the world, the Maharishi took no credit for himself, but expressed gratitude to his teacher for passing on to him this “wisdom of living the fullness of life.”

These were my first impressions of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. My first impression of Transcendental Meditation, gained a few weeks later when I took the course offered by the Students International Meditation Society, was that everything he had said was true.



Although I knew almost nothing about it at the time, the movement that had grown up around Maharishi was already international in scope. After thirteen years with his spiritual master followed by two years of seclusion in the “Valley of Saints” in the Himalayas, he had traversed the globe each year, starting in 1957, opening centers throughout Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas, and the technique of Transcendental Meditation that he taught was becoming increasingly well known. But in the summer of 1967, something was to happen that would change the course of history, for myself as well as millions of others.

I was in New York that summer, working for my uncles' hardware company, installing fences throughout the city as a helper with their work crews. One muggy August afternoon after work, when I returned to the apartment I was sharing, I picked up the newspaper, and on the front page was a photograph of Maharishi with the phenomenally popular musical group, The Beatles. When I took one look at that picture, I said aloud, "My God, it's all going to change!"

And it did. The TM movement had been, up to that point, a small and intimate thing. Those who were involved in it pretty much all knew one another, and when Maharishi came to town, they could spend some time with him. But with the advent of the Beatles, suddenly thousands, and then tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of young people became interested, and lines formed outside TM centers on weekends to learn the practice.

When I moved to Los Angeles that autumn to continue my education, I began to write this book. I created a questionnaire asking people about their experiences with TM, which I placed in centers where TM was taught, and a surprising number of responses began to roll in. All were enthusiastic, and many were quite detailed in describing the wonderful experiences people were having and the changes and virtual transformations in their relationships, performance at school and work, health, and happiness. I felt, from my own experience, the benefits of meditation, but these responses encouraged me to pursue the rather fantastical idea of creating a book.

I read whatever I could get hold of, which was very little—only Maharishi's two works, *Science of Being and Art*

of *Living*, and his newly published *Translation and Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita*.<sup>1</sup> Not one of the hundreds of scientific research studies that have come out since then had been published. Most of the material in the first draft of the book was created from my reading of Maharishi's books, from the replies to my questionnaire and follow-up interviews with some of the respondents, and the tremendous inspiration and knowledge I gained by attending every lecture given by Jerry Jarvis, the national director of the TM movement.

Jerry was an eloquent spokesman for Maharishi, and a deeply devoted student of his teacher. Not only did I attend every talk that Mr. Jarvis offered in the Los Angeles area, whether introductory or advanced, but within a few months I joined a team of young people who had begun to speak about the benefits of TM at colleges and universities in the area. One of these individuals was Keith Wallace, a graduate student at UCLA who would soon publish pioneering studies on the physiological effects of TM in three distinguished scientific journals: *Science* (the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science), *Scientific American*, and the *American Journal of Physiology*.<sup>2</sup>

In the summer of 1968, I attended a program in Squaw Valley, California, 6,000 feet high in the Sierra Nevadas, conducted by Maharishi as the first phase in training teachers of TM. About 750 people were in attendance. I brought with me the fledgling manuscript I was working, with the desire to give it to him to look at. I soon discovered that he rarely read anything himself, but would reserve the transmission of information for a relationship with his students. Someone would read to him, and he would comment. Others would listen and learn from these interactions.

So, my desire transmuted to an attempt to read some or all of my book to Maharishi. I tried to arrange a meeting through his secretaries and assistants, but somehow it never happened. On the final night of the course, I stayed up until the wee hours of the morning (as Maharishi did every night), and at somewhere between three and four o'clock, when he finished his last meeting in the lecture hall and was walking through the dining room toward his own quarters, followed by a train of people trying to get close enough to ask questions as he made his way among the tables and chairs, I stood directly in front of him with my manuscript and boldly said, "Maharishi, I'm writing a book about TM."

He stopped—as he had nowhere else to go—and replied, "Very good!" Then he added, "What is your profession?"

"I'm still a student."

"What is your course of study?"

"Religion and philosophy."


"Then you must include a good chapter about religion!"

"May I show you some of the book?" I asked him.

"When it's finished. Meanwhile, you can speak to Jerry about it."

And that was the extent of the meeting. But I felt inspired by Maharishi's interest, and was excited about the prospect of sharing it with him and seeking his blessing for it when it was complete.





In the autumn of 1968, shortly after my 25th birthday, I moved to Ohio, where I'd decided to finish my undergraduate studies. During that year, as I had already accumulated a large number of credits in my major, I was permitted to do a significant amount of independent study. One of these courses involved completing the manuscript for this book. I believe my professors must have thought it quite unusual to have a student proposing to write a 350- or 400-page manuscript for three units of credit, but they gave me the opportunity, and I managed to do it. Toward the end of the year, I decided to switch from my focus on religion and philosophy. I applied to a Masters in Fine Arts (MFA) writing program at Ohio University, and received a graduate assistantship.

In my first semester there, in the fall of 1969, interest in TM began to boom in the Midwest, but there were no teachers living in the area. I had such a strong desire to share the benefits of meditation with others that I took it upon myself to organize and offer introductory talks at universities in a number of different cities. In some of these places, my talk was the first ever given on TM. All the posters had a picture of Maharishi on them, advertising a talk on "Transcendental Meditation as taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi," and I suspect that sometimes the audience must have been disappointed to find that the speaker was a graduate student wearing a jacket and tie, rather than a bearded, white-robed yogi from the Himalayas.

Those lectures were frequently attended by 200, 300, or 400 people. And I, a completely untrained speaker who wasn't even a TM teacher, found myself alone onstage in front of

those groups in large auditoriums and lecture halls. Looking back on it now, I find it hard to believe that I had the courage to do it, or that the leadership of the TM movement in the U.S. had the confidence in me to allow it. In any case, interest in TM was very high; large courses were held in all those cities, and I found myself returning to each place to meet with the new and continuing meditators, to offer advanced lectures on Maharishi's teachings.

It was my deepest desire to become a teacher of Transcendental Meditation. In fact, on that January day in Berkeley when I received my initial instruction, in the midst of the process I turned to my teacher and asked, "How does one become a teacher of this?"

He replied, "We can discuss that later. Right now let's just continue learning." Which we did. But that desire stayed with me, and grew. It was fueled by my own growing happiness, which I wanted to share with others; by what I'd seen in the people I met who were visibly transformed by their TM practice; and perhaps most of all, by the potential I saw for a better world if large numbers of people could enjoy the benefits of meditation.

So I was thrilled, during the Thanksgiving vacation of 1969 in Ohio, when I received a phone call from Jerry Jarvis, the national director. It went something like this:

"Hi, Jack, this is Jerry."

"Hi, Jerry."

"What are you doing in January?"

Long pause.

“Yes! I want to go!”

Laughter. “Good! We’ll take care of the costs.”

I had just been invited to go to India to study with Maharishi, and train to become a teacher. What had held me back up to that point was the money: the round-trip fare to India, and the cost of the teacher-training course itself, which I had never looked into, believing I couldn’t afford it. When the exultation diminished enough for me to think clearly, I realized that I had signed an agreement to be a graduate student, receive a fellowship stipend, and teach classes for the duration of my time at the university. I had every intention and desire to go to India, but wasn’t sure if I would be able to do so. So I went to the graduate advisor and presented my case like this:

“I love my classes, and I’ve enjoyed teaching. But I’ve just had an offer to study in India with a great spiritual master, and I would really like to do it. I also want to pursue my career at the university. What do you think I should do?”

The professor gazed at me with an incredulity that I misinterpreted at first. “There’s absolutely no question about it,” he said, and I knew the ax was about to fall, that he was about to say, “How can you even consider something so irresponsible as going off to India when you have such a generous fellowship here, and an opportunity to advance your career?” But what I heard was: “The university will always be here. You can always go to graduate school. If you have a

chance to go to India and study, how can you even think twice about it?”

I laughed and said, “Oh, all right then, so you would approve?”

“Absolutely! And have a great time. Stop by to tell me about it when you get back.”



Early in January 1970, I found myself arriving at the New Delhi airport, about to begin one of the great adventures of my life. In my suitcase was the first draft of this book, which I’d completed in my final undergraduate year, and then hadn’t looked at again.

I spent the next three months in Maharishi’s academy in the foothills of the Himalayas, across the Ganges from the ancient pilgrimage town of Rishikesh, on a bluff overlooking the great river. The opportunity to meet with such a brilliant, wise, and compassionate teacher three times a day is something one probably doesn’t fully appreciate while it was happening. In a completely effortless way, without strain, I sat in front of Maharishi with 176 others from around the world, and absorbed the knowledge so patiently and systematically—and yet spontaneously—offered by this great sage. He used no notes, had no books piled up for reference on the small table in front of him, and showed no videos, slides, or PowerPoints. Rather, for three months, he just *talked*, and answered all our questions, both practical (about the procedures of teaching, for example) and spiritual/philosophical. It was an awesome display of knowledge.

The word *rishi* means sage or seer, one who sees deeply into the truth of life, and particularly into the truth of the *Veda*, the knowledge of life that is expressed in the Vedic literature of India. The term *maharishi* is reserved for the greatest rishis (*maha* means great) who not only “see,” but who also embody the knowledge and from the deep compassion of their hearts offer it to others so that their lives may be enriched.

And what is the knowledge that they embody and convey? That within every one of us lies a vast and largely untapped reservoir of energy, intelligence, happiness, and peace that is our very own deepest, truest self—and that if we can come into conscious contact and attunement with it, our lives will be transformed. We will no longer need to constantly look for happiness and security in other people or in our activities and achievements; we will no longer be tossed about by the ever-changing ups and downs of experience in the world; instead, we will live a life centered in peace and contentment.

During my free hours at the academy, I would haul a chair up to the flat roof of the one-story building I lived in. I brought my manuscript and, amidst the chatter of monkeys and the eerie call of peacocks in the breezy spring afternoons, based on the knowledge I was receiving, began to make serious revisions, deepening the presentation to match the deepening understanding that was growing within me.

I don't really remember how much I was able to complete during the time in India, as the intensity of the course increased as time went on, both in terms of our personal experiences of meditation, and the lectures as well as the smaller training and practice groups that evolved to help us

learn. We met in groups every afternoon to practice lecturing and, more important, to master the subtle art of meditation instruction so that we could lead students through the many types of experiences for which they might need explanations and guidance.

We also gradually increased the number of hours spent in meditation, many of us doubling the minimum of four to six hours we had been sitting each day. At one point in the middle of the course, we had a *72-hour* meditation. Maharishi told us to take three pieces of fruit to our room; we were to sit, and not lie down, for 72 hours; to meditate straight through—but to eat one piece of fruit each day, in the daytime, so we would know how many days had gone by! The depth of silence and expanded awareness that many of us experienced (and later reported when we returned to our meetings on the fourth day) was profoundly fulfilling.

At the end of the course, I put my manuscript back in my suitcase and forgot about it, as I immediately became involved full-time in the work of teaching and organizing. I had intended to go to California to work with Jerry Jarvis at the national headquarters, but passing through New York, I stopped to visit the new TM center in Greenwich Village. The center leader asked if I would consider taking over the center for one month while he went to an advanced course for teachers in Europe. Glad for the opportunity to immediately begin teaching, I agreed.

He never returned, and I found myself the head of the New York City center, and within a short time, the Area Coordinator for New York and New Jersey, offering courses, lectures, and weekend and longer in-residence courses for

thousands of meditators. I also coordinated the activities of the hundreds of teachers who began, over the next couple of years, to return from training courses given by Maharishi in Europe. The number of interested students far exceeded the capacity of the academy in India, so arrangements were made for off-season rentals of hotels in such lovely places as Mallorca, Spain, where those desiring to be trained as teachers could be housed at a reasonable cost.

By this time, I'd developed a strong desire to work more closely with Maharishi. In 1971, when he passed through New York, I had a few moments to speak privately with him. I asked him two things. First, when he inquired about how I was doing, I replied, "I'm doing well, but there are still some moments when I don't feel completely happy or smooth in my behavior."

He smiled and said, "It will only happen when you're tired."

Looking back on this, I can barely believe the naïveté I presented to him, a young Westerner who'd practiced meditation for all of four years, expecting to be perfectly at peace and living in eternal bliss! And I marvel, in retrospect, at Maharishi's ability not to burst out laughing! Nevertheless, his answer has proven to be, over 40 years, precisely true. If I am even reasonably rested, I *do* feel content, peaceful, and able to deal with whatever comes my way.

But the more important question I got to ask him was: "Maharishi, I would like to come and be with you at the international headquarters."

He looked at me intently and said, “But who will be in New York?”

I immediately listed half a dozen teachers who, in my opinion, were fully capable of running the center. And then with great tenderness and sweetness, he said again, “But who will be in New York?” I understood that he wanted me to stay, and I accepted that.

During the following year, I managed to complete another revision of my book. But not knowing anything about publishing, I simply put the manuscript in a drawer and left it there. One day I woke up with the thought, *It's time to do something with the manuscript*. And then something happened that will make any would-be author envious. That morning at the TM center, I asked the first person who came in the door: “You wouldn't happen to know anything about publishing, or have any contacts with any publishing companies, would you?”

She said, “I do know one editor, at E. P. Dutton,” at that time one of the larger American publishers. She kindly gave me the name of that person.

Later in the day when I had a moment, I called E. P. Dutton, asked for the editor, and said, “I've written a book about Transcendental Meditation. Would you be interested in seeing it?”

She said, “I would be *very* interested!”

I said, ‘I'll send it to you.’”



“Could you possibly *bring* it over?”

Within a few days, I had a signed contract for my book to be published.

At this point, I’d been working on the book entirely on my own. Only one person had read it, and that was Jerry Jarvis, who’d read through it and had made a few small suggestions. But I felt: *This is Maharishi’s teaching, and this is the first book being published about TM; he should have a chance to read it and correct any errors I might have made, or give it his approval.*

So I took a leave from my work and went to Europe, where Maharishi was conducting another large teacher-training course. I brought my manuscript with me, and there I was again able to have a private meeting with him in his room. And the most wonderful thing happened. Holding my manuscript in my hands, I said, “Maharishi, I finished my book, and I have a contract to publish it. I would like you to hear it.”

He asked, “Are you satisfied with it?”

I could not lie about it. I had rewritten the book five times. Each draft was completely new. I’m quite certain there was not a single sentence left over from the first version. I had labored with all the love and intelligence in my being to make every phrase, sentence, and paragraph in the book truthful and clear. So I told him, “Yes, I am satisfied with it. But, it’s your teaching. I would like *you* to be satisfied with it.”

“Then we’ll hear it!”

I said, “Good. May I read it to you?”

He looked at me and asked again, “But are you satisfied with it?”

Again I told him, “Yes, I am.”

“Then it’s all right.”

The way he said that was so definitive, and so deeply appreciative, that I felt he knew the labor I had put in, the effort I’d made to be sure that every aspect of his teaching was presented accurately, and I felt, *All right. It’s okay.*

So then I brought up my second point. “Maharishi, I want to offer your movement all the money I receive for the book.”

“No,” he said. “You keep it.”


I had been firm in my desire to not accept money for the book. I wanted to give it to Maharishi to further his work. So I argued. “I really want to give it to the movement.”

He looked at me and said simply, “You keep it.”

Yet a third time, I insisted, “I don’t need it. I have all that I need.”

He told me, “You keep it. You’ll need it.”

I had heard it said that it is not permissible, once a master tells you something three times, to argue. So I simply dropped the point. And it turned out that I *would* need that money!




In the summer of 1972, a one-month TM teacher-training course was held at Humboldt State University in California, near one of the world's last great stands of giant redwood trees. I went for some rest and the chance to spend extra hours in deep meditation, but Maharishi immediately put me to work creating materials that were to be used throughout the world in a new course he was developing, called the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI). This was a detailed analysis of the nature and unfoldment of consciousness, uniting the modern, scientific, objective approach with the ancient, subjective but equally rigorous approach of the Vedas. By the time the Humboldt course was drawing to a close, I had not quite finished my work, so I went to him, materials in hand, prepared to turn them over to someone else to complete.

“Maharishi, I haven't finished editing the SCI texts. But it's time for me to return to New York.” I was very conscious of the fact that he had directed me to stay in New York only a year previously. But this time he surprised me by asking, “Why go to New York?”

I burst out laughing, and he laughed, too. It was at that moment that my years of working closely with him as part of his international staff, and helping him to train teachers, would begin.

But that's another story.



Since that time, many years have passed, and my continuing experience with Maharishi and his teaching of Transcendental Meditation has brought ever-increasing richness into my life. Having spent several years being in Maharishi's presence, observing his behavior, watching his interactions with his students and with visiting scientists, educators, and learned scholars, listening to him teach and respond to questions and to unspoken needs, laying out his vision for the world and inspiring others to help transform it into reality, I can see that my first impressions were, while accurate, far from complete in fathoming the integrity, vision, and scope of this remarkable man.

Having also spent many years *not* around him, nor actively involved in his movement, living instead a relatively "normal" life in the world—pursuing a career, sustaining a marriage, caring for an elderly parent, writing about topics other than meditation, living through many changes in myself and in the world—I have a perspective on Maharishi and his work quite different from that of the 24-year-old who set out to write about something new and exciting in his life. I have revised and updated this book from that new place.

As I said in the original edition, this book began as an objective look at Transcendental Meditation and its results. But it would be untrue to claim that this is a completely objective study. I have been faithful to critical standards of accuracy in reporting scientific data and results from questionnaires and recorded interviews. But I have made no effort to conceal my enthusiasm for Maharishi's teaching and its potential value. When we find something good, we want to share it, and that has been the guiding motivation in the preparation of both the old and new versions of this book.





## CHAPTER ONE

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### TM AND THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

In all ages and places, men and women have sought happiness, and fulfillment of their potential as human beings. It seems that our efforts to achieve fulfillment have become increasingly complex, but not necessarily more effective. In our own age, this search is more intense, yet often appears to be more unsuccessful than ever before. We have talked about fulfillment so much, looked in so many different directions, and tried so many different things that we hardly know what we desire anymore. What, indeed, do we want out of life? What is happiness? What does it mean to be fulfilled? Is it even possible?

My personal wrestling with these questions began when I was in high school. As I looked around at the adults in my universe; at their values and the way they lived; at what I perceived as the lack of magic, vitality, and meaning in their day-to-day routines, I realized with increasing certainty that I could never be happy or satisfied living a life like the ones I saw playing out around me. So I began to search for alternatives. I didn't define this as a spiritual quest (nothing in my family background would have encouraged me to think in that way), but looking back, it's clear that's what it was.

The prevailing "wisdom" at the time consistently pounded home the message that happiness comes from making money

and securing material comforts, forging a successful career, and buying lots of stuff. But all of that seemed quite hollow to me. Not that it was inherently bad; it just wasn't enough. As the contemporary American novelist David Foster Wallace said many years later: "If you worship money and things—if they are where you tap real meaning in life—then you will never have enough. Never feel you have enough."<sup>1</sup>

As I read books and explored the world, it became clear that not only were there alternatives to the established cultural norms, but many other people were also engaged in the search for a more meaningful life. Over the years, as I've met thousands of people through my travels and teaching activities, I've felt that this quest has become more widespread.

But it has not become any simpler. The available alternatives—from organized religion and various psychological systems, to self-styled gurus and "New Age" teachings of all kinds—have proliferated so wildly, and are often accompanied by so much hype, that it's hard to separate the wheat from the chaff, the helpful from the merely well promoted. I believe there are many genuine paths to a better life. But how does a person know which one to choose?

The search for greater happiness takes us from one activity to another. If we do something and are not fulfilled by it, we turn elsewhere. If we are not satisfied with one way of life, one occupation, one mate, one house or car, we look for another. We are always on the lookout for *something*, some system, technique, or knowledge, some bit of information that can help us tap into more of our creative powers and become more aware, loving, and alive. And even those who appear to



escape this restless pattern, who have successful careers and maintain stable family lives, often find themselves at the therapist's office looking for answers—or at least an effective antidepressant. But what are we really looking for? What is missing?

### *MAHARISHI'S VEDIC SCIENCE*

Amidst the profusion of teachings and teachers, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation program has been given steady and ever-increasing attention by scientists, educators, students, and professionals. The theoretical framework of Maharishi's teaching, which he spoke of at various times as the "Science of Creative Intelligence" or "Vedic Science"—and in this book I will favor the latter term—is derived from a combination of Western scientific methods of objective investigation and the ancient wisdom of subjective development proclaimed in the Vedic literature of India.

The Vedas are generally considered the oldest, or certainly among the oldest, records of human experience, dating back many thousands of years. Maharishi's Vedic Science examines the organizing intelligence operating in our individual lives and throughout nature, from the structure of the atoms to the motions of the stars. Through its nearly 40 branches, including medicine (Ayurveda), architecture, (Sthapatya Veda), agriculture, Yoga, and a military science (Dhanur Veda) that aims for "victory before war", it applies that knowledge to every phase of life and living.

The ideas and principles of Vedic Science are fascinating, profound, and potentially life transforming, for both

individuals and the world. More than merely a philosophy or a system of ideas, however, Maharishi's Vedic Science is really a practical science for the development of consciousness. It utilizes subjective technologies to explore the universe within each of us, and objective measurement and analysis to test and validate its principles on the basis of direct and repeatable experience and observation: in essence, *the scientific method*.

The foundation of Vedic Science is the Transcendental Meditation technique: a simple, natural mental process that enables a person to directly experience the source of creative intelligence at the deepest level of the mind and apply it to all aspects of life. Research has shown that the practice of transcending—allowing the mind to settle to its most calm and silent level—produces a deep state of rest and a uniquely coherent style of brain functioning that supports Maharishi's longtime claim that TM “enlivens the total brain.”

## OPRAH LOVES TM

If you had to characterize in one word or phrase Oprah Winfrey's enormously successful, long-running program, you might choose the theme of this chapter: the search for happiness. Experts in personal growth, relationships, wealth building, spirituality, health, child rearing, and pretty much every sphere of life came onto her stage and offered the world the fruits of their knowledge and experience.

Over the years, Oprah hosted many TM practitioners: Deepak Chopra, Mehmet Oz, John Gray, and many more. In early 2011, she learned the technique herself, and in October, she visited Fairfield, Iowa, home to the Maharishi University of

Management. While there, she meditated in one of the two meditation domes with about 1,000 women of the community. Writing in *O, The Oprah Magazine* a couple of months later, she said:

“Housewives, shop clerks, engineers, waitresses, lawyers, moms, single ladies, and me—we all gathered in our dome for the sole purpose of being still. Knowing that stillness is the space where all creative expression, peace, light, and love come to be. It was a powerfully energizing yet calming experience. I didn’t want it to end. “When it did, I walked away feeling fuller than when I’d come in. Full of hope, a sense of contentment, and deep joy. Knowing for sure that even in the daily craziness that bombards us from every direction, there is—still—the constancy of stillness.

“Only from that space can you create your best work and your best life....

“TM teachers have taught everyone in my company who wanted to learn how to meditate. The results have been awesome. Better sleep. Improved relationships with spouses, children, coworkers. Some people who once suffered migraines don’t anymore. Greater productivity and creativity all around.”

### *A “BILLION-DOLLAR BLOCKBUSTER”*

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Maharishi’s teachings is the substantial body of research that has been performed to test its validity and verify its results. TM is not about a mood or an attitude; data from more than 350 published, peer-reviewed scientific studies show that the

physiological, psychological, and behavioral changes that occur during TM practice, and the benefits that stem from these experiences, are real, quantifiable, and quite extraordinary. If you're not familiar with the term "peer reviewed," it refers to a scientific paper that has passed the scrutiny of a panel of experts and authorities in the field, who must give a thumbs-up on both the methodology used and the conclusions drawn from the results before the paper will be accepted for publication. Peer-reviewed papers are the "gold standard" of scientific research.

According to Dr. Sidney Weinstein, longtime editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Neuroscience*, one of the world's most prestigious scientific journals:

Over the past 10 years, the editors and reviewers of the *International Journal of Neuroscience* have accepted several papers on Transcendental Meditation because they have met the rigorous standards of scientific publication. IJN is honored to have two Nobel laureates on its editorial board, and has a distinguished group of scientists from leading universities on every continent who judge the scientific value of the papers submitted for consideration. Not once have these scientists ever questioned the integrity or scientific validity of the papers on Transcendental Meditation. The fact that the articles on Transcendental Meditation continue to appear in large numbers in reputable journals in addition to IJN demonstrates ... that this is an area of scientific research that's here to stay.<sup>2</sup>

The research on TM, then, is top quality and highly reliable.

What it shows is that from the very first days of TM practice, a new meditator enjoys a profound state of rest and relaxation, allowing for the release of accumulated stress and tension. Over the following weeks, months, and years of daily practice, increasing freedom from the restrictions of stress allows meditators to enjoy life more fully and to become more successful in their chosen spheres of interest and influence. A wide range of health benefits has been documented, such as increased energy, reduced depression, fewer headaches, relief from insomnia, and easier breathing in people with asthma. Researchers have reported a marked decrease in anxiety, as well as significant reductions in cholesterol and blood-pressure levels—two potentially life-threatening conditions. Drug, alcohol, and tobacco usage spontaneously decline or even disappear. People develop greater self-esteem and emotional stability. Measures of self-actualization climb. Relationships become more harmonious and rewarding.

Norman Rosenthal, M.D., a former senior researcher at the National Institute of Mental Health, and internationally acclaimed as the scientist who first described seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and pioneered its treatment, said, “If Transcendental Meditation were a drug, conferring so many benefits with few, if any, side effects, it would be a billion-dollar blockbuster.”<sup>3</sup>

#### SOME OF THE JOURNALS THAT HAVE PUBLISHED TM RESEARCH:

Academy of Management Journal

Addictive Behaviors

Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly

American Journal of Cardiology

American Journal of Health Promotion

American Journal of Hypertension

American Journal of Managed Care

American Journal of Physiology

American Journal of Psychiatry

American Psychologist

Annals of Behavioral Medicine

Archives of Internal Medicine

Behavioral Medicine

Biological Psychology

British Journal of Educational Psychology

British Journal of Psychology

Bulletin of the Society of Psychologists in Addictive Behaviors

Business and Health

Circulation

Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology and Physiology

Clinical Research

Consciousness and Cognition

Frontiers in Bioscience

Criminal Justice and Behavior

Education

Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology

Energy Metabolism

European Journal of Endocrinology

European Journal of Physiology

Experiential Medicine

Experimental Neurology

German Journal of Clinical Psychology

German Journal of General Medicine

Health and Quality of Life Outcomes

Hormones and Behavior

Hospital and Community Psychiatry

Human Physiology

Hypertension (AHA)

Intelligence

International Congress of Internal Medicine Abstracts

International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal  
Justice

International Journal of Neuroscience

International Journal of Psychophysiology

International Journal of the Addictions

Japanese Journal of Industrial Health

Japanese Journal of Public Health

Journal of Adult Development

Journal of Business & Psychology

Journal of Aging and Health

Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine

Journal of Applied Physiology: Respiratory, Environmental  
and Exercise Physiology



Journal of Behavioral Medicine

Journal of Biomedicine

Journal of Chronic Disease and Therapeutic Research

Journal of Clinical Psychiatry

Journal of Clinical Psychology

Journal of Conflict Resolution

Journal of Counseling and Development

Journal of Counseling Psychology

Journal of Creative Behavior

Journal of Crime and Justice

Journal of Criminal Justice

Journal of Human Stress

Journal of Humanistic Psychology

Journal of Hypertension

Journal of Inhalation Technology

Journal of Management Education

Journal of Mind and Behavior

Journal of Moral Education

Journal of the National Medical Association

Journal of Neural Transmission

Journal of Offender Rehabilitation

Journal of Personality and Individual Differences

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

Journal of Personality Assessment

Journal of Psychology

Journal of Psychosomatic Research

Journal of the American Aging Association

Journal of the Canadian Medical Association

Journal of the Israel Medical Association

L'Encéphale (The Brain)

Lancet

Memory and Cognition

Motivation. Motor and Sensory Processes of the Brain

Netherlands Journal of Psychology

Neuroendocrinology Letters

Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews

Perceptual and Motor Skills

Personality and Individual Differences

Physiologist, The

Physiology & Behavior

Proceedings of the Endocrine Society of Australia

Progress in Brain Research

Psychologia: International Journal of Psychology in the  
Orient

Psychological Reports

Psychology, Crime & Law

Psychoneuroendocrinology

Psychophysiology

Psychosomatic Medicine

Psychotherapie-Psychosomatik Medizinische Psychologie

Respiration

Revue d'Electroencéphalographie et de Neurophysiologie  
Clinique

Science

Scientific American

Sleep Research

Social Behavior and Personality

Social Indicators Research

Social Science Perspectives Journal

Society for Neuroscience Abstracts

Stroke (AHA)

Transactions of the American Society for Neurochemistry

Vestes: The Australian Universities' Review

Western Psychologist (Western Psychological Association)



## CHAPTER TWO

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### NEW KNOWLEDGE FOR A NEW AGE

A physics graduate of Allahabad University in India (perhaps his education partially accounts for the clear and systematic character of his teachings), Maharishi then studied with his own spiritual master in the Himalayas for 13 years before beginning to teach Transcendental Meditation throughout the world. His teacher, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, had been a forest-dwelling hermit monk from the age of nine before being recruited late in life to serve as *Shankaracharya of northern India*, a public position of the highest spiritual authority.

Recalling his beloved teacher, Maharishi said, “He expounded the Truth in its all-embracing nature. His quiet words, coming from the unboundedness of his heart, pierced the hearts of all who heard him and brought enlightenment to their minds. His message was the message of fullness of heart and mind.” A picture of Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, or *Guru Dev* (Divine Teacher), as he is affectionately called, was always prominently displayed wherever Maharishi taught or spoke.

When Guru Dev passed away in 1953, Maharishi settled in a cave in Uttar Kashi, a Himalayan region sometimes known as the Valley of the Saints because of all the ascetics, yogis, and other spiritual luminaries who lived nearby. In 1955, a

recurring thought to visit a temple in south India drew Maharishi away for what he expected would be a short pilgrimage. At the request of people in the south to “share some of the wisdom of the Himalayas,” he lectured and taught what he would later call Transcendental Meditation. The results were so deeply gratifying that he resolved to share the practice with as many people as possible.

After two years of teaching in India, moving slowly from town to town, he reflected on what he had accomplished and what lay ahead, and realized that at his present rate of instruction, it would take no less than 200 years to bring TM to the entire world! So he decided to visit the West, where transportation and communication were more efficient, and where his message could spread more rapidly. Over the next few decades, he circled the globe numerous times, speaking in over 60 countries and, starting in 1961, training teachers.

At latest count (in 2012), TM is being taught by 40,000 teachers in 170 countries, and more than six million people have learned the practice.

Scientists and educators, athletes and actors, politicians and police officers, soldiers and scholars practice TM. Some have publicly endorsed it, although most celebrities and public figures prefer to practice out of the glare of the media. A few years ago, President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, a country that had been torn apart by a long and bloody civil war, spoke glowingly of his association with TM. “First I started the practice of Transcendental Meditation myself, then introduced the practice to my close family, my cabinet of ministers, my government officers, and my military,” he said.

“The result has been political peace and balance in nature in my country.”<sup>1</sup>

If you're curious, a regularly updated list of several hundred prominent people who practice TM is at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Transcendental\\_Meditation\\_practitioners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Transcendental_Meditation_practitioners).

### *TM AROUND THE WORLD*

In the United States, TM has been introduced to students at more than 1,000 middle schools, high schools, colleges, and universities from coast to coast, including Harvard, Yale, Barnard, Bennington, Penn State, and West Point on the East Coast, and moving west, at Ohio State, the University of Colorado, the University of California at Berkeley, Stanford, UCLA, and more. In addition to courses for the general public, TM has been taught to inner-city school children and to senior corporate executives in plush boardrooms. More than 6,000 physicians have learned TM in the United States, and based on the research and on their own experiences, many routinely recommend it to their patients.

Courses are offered at Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals, especially targeting war veterans suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). American Indians on their reservations and homeless men and women in urban shelters (more than half of whom are veterans), have been taught the practice, and the TM organization is working with the Departments of Corrections in Ohio and Oregon to offer TM to both inmates and guards in state prisons. Researchers are documenting the results of many of these programs. Acclaimed film director David Lynch has created a



foundation ([davidlynchfoundation.org](http://davidlynchfoundation.org)) with the goal of providing scholarships to one million “at-risk” school children so they can learn TM; as of this writing, it has sponsored about 200,000.

“Every child traumatized by violence should be given this tool to find peace within,” said Lynch. “The research is compelling, and the benefits are real.”

In other parts of the globe, programs are providing instruction in Transcendental Meditation to:

- Members of the armed forces of Ecuador, to generate an influence of peace
- Children in Peruvian schools high in the Andes
- Israeli Palestinians
- Students in South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, and other African countries
- Students in Bali, Thailand, China, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere in the Far East
- Thousands of orphaned street children in Colombia, sponsored by a Catholic priest
- Students throughout the UK and the European Union countries, as well as in Russia, Poland, and other nations of Eastern Europe

In India, in addition to the many public educational institutions where TM and Vedic Science are taught as part of a standard educational curriculum, Maharishi also organized a network of schools for the training of Vedic experts, where tens of thousands of young people enjoy free or very low-cost education in traditional Vedic knowledge.

I'll talk about these and other programs throughout the book.

Maharishi's message—that it is possible to unfold the full potential of mind and heart and live a life of freedom, fulfillment, and happiness—has been embraced by people of all ages and backgrounds. “The vast acceptance of Transcendental Meditation throughout the world,” he once said, “is due to its effects not only for the individual, but for all that is dear to him: his family, his society, his nation, his world.”<sup>2</sup>

In all the years I've been either intimately connected to the TM organization or have been an interested observer of its activities, very little advertising has been used, beyond a few posters on college campuses or on a public-library bulletin board announcing a lecture. It has been almost entirely a grassroots movement, spreading by word of mouth from one practitioner to another.

### *UNIQUENESS*

The TM technique is unique in a number of ways. First, it differs from other programs for self-development and most (if not all) forms of meditation in that it is systematically taught and practiced. The teaching is both standardized (there's a seven-step program requiring about ten hours of instruction)

and flexible: the technique is imparted one-on-one, with the teacher delicately guiding each student step-by-step based on the student's experience. The technique itself leaves nothing to guesswork or trial and error: it is specific and exact, and during the course, the student learns how to deal with each kind of experience (thoughts, distractions, and so on) that may come up during meditation at home. Anyone who has tried to meditate in a yoga class, for example, or at the "Y," will appreciate the precise nature of TM.

Second, and paradoxically, while TM is exact, systematically taught and practiced, and has been extensively analyzed by scientists, it is also entirely natural and easily mastered. After the initial course of instruction, new meditators are fully prepared to practice on their own, although they're encouraged to consult with a teacher periodically to verify the correctness of their practice and to pose any questions they may have. (This service is free for a lifetime, anywhere in the world, for anyone who takes the course.) Although, as with anything, you have to *do* it in order to reap the benefits, the practice itself requires no discipline, concentration, or control, nor is it emotionally demanding. It involves no lifestyle change (no special diet or dress), asks no one to adopt new beliefs, and can be practiced anywhere, in any comfortable position. (I'll explain more about the course, and much more about the practice, in [Chapter 4](#).)

*"Everyone needs sound physical and mental health, greater ability in action, a greater capacity to think clearly, increased efficiency in work, and more loving and rewarding relationships with others. All this can be gained through the regular practice of Transcendental Meditation, which opens the awareness to the infinite reservoir of energy, creativity,*

*and intelligence that lies deep within everyone. By enlivening this most basic level of life, Transcendental Meditation is that one simple procedure which can raise the life of every individual and every society to its full dignity, in which problems are absent and perfect health, happiness, and a rapid pace of progress are the natural features of life.”*

— MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI

Another vital point of uniqueness is that the *goals* of TM and of the entire range of Maharishi’s Vedic Science are clearly defined. His presentation of the possible stages of development attainable by any person is detailed and thorough, and his delineation of the path to achieving this growth is systematic and easily understood. The ideal of human development he set forth far surpasses the vision of modern psychology. We’ll explore this premise in [Chapter 11](#).

### *SKEPTICS AND ENTHUSIASTS*

If the personal experiences of those who learn TM, communicated enthusiastically to friends, co-workers, and family members, is the main reason for the expansion of TM, the ever-increasing body of scientific knowledge about it runs a close second. Today, anyone can go on the Internet and locate dozens of studies that would convince even the most cynical of the potential value of the technique. But that wasn’t always the case. When I learned TM, there had been absolutely no research to convince me of its value. But I was lucky: the first talk I heard about TM was given by Maharishi, and I knew immediately that I wanted to grow toward the

state of being that he embodied. Others took the course despite their doubts.

“I began to meditate with skepticism and doubt,” wrote A. James Morgan, M.D., former director of Adult Treatment Services at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia.

When the fragile method was taught to me, it seemed impossible that this delicate thing could hope to accomplish anything beyond being a delightful way to relax twice a day. I began because the consensus of the testimony I heard was too unanimous to be rejected and compelled me to try it firsthand. It was clear that there could be no danger in such a natural, delicate and guileless procedure and so I began, expecting nothing.

The effects were as others reported. They were immediate and increased with time. I began to feel more alert and awake at work, and even through the evenings after particularly busy days. I no longer say, “What a grueling day” even though I am now doing much more than I had previously. Work just doesn’t seem tiring. I have more energy with which to relate to people, and not feeling drained, I no longer feel put upon by the endless details and trivia with which I must deal.<sup>3</sup>

Not everyone is as eloquent in describing their experiences, but what Dr. Morgan reported is not at all unusual. His remark that he began TM “with skepticism and doubt” is significant. Over the years I’ve told several people who were wavering about whether or not to take the TM course that it really didn’t matter if they believed it worked or not, so long as they would be willing to learn it and then practice it as taught. If they would do that, the results would come.

This brings to mind one of my early teaching experiences. Even though I've given many hundreds of talks on TM in my life, I still remember one I gave to the New York City chapter of Mensa, the organization for highly intelligent people. I was uncharacteristically nervous as I neared the building on Manhattan's Upper West Side, and I realized it was because one of the main points I generally emphasized in my talks was that TM increases a person's intelligence! I could imagine this audience thinking, *So, big deal!* And I dreaded having to take hostile questions from a group of New Yorkers with IQs in the stratosphere. But as I stood to speak after being introduced, I had a sudden realization. I told them exactly what I'd been thinking, and then I said, "But now it seems to me that it is precisely the more intelligent person who recognizes the great importance and value of intelligence, and would like to have more of it." Heads nodded in agreement, and I knew I was in safe territory.

A few years later I discovered an article in the *Mensa Journal* where the writer said, in part:

From my own experience of about three years' practice of TM, I can attest to the truth of some of the claims, particularly about tranquility and [reduction of] tensions and functional disorders. At no time has the technique given rise to any distressing symptoms.... I would stress the comment about non-adoption of new beliefs. Any person, whatever his belief or non-belief, may engage in TM without any offense to his principles. I believe that one who tries such an experiment is likely to find it a rewarding venture. In order to give the thing a fair trial, I continued with it, in the face of an early skepticism amounting at times to hostility. My views have changed completely.<sup>4</sup>







## CHAPTER THREE

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### THE GOAL OF LIFE

#### *THE DIRECTION OF EVOLUTION*

Everyone wants to be happy, to grow, to be more successful, more loving and alive. The desire that we all share, for a better life, is born of the powerful tendency deep within the heart of all living things to progress, to evolve, to move toward a state of fulfillment. This is nature's way.

A seed, for example, contains within its silent core the coiled alphabet that spells out not only the design for the final structure of the tree it is destined to become, but the strategy for getting there in collaboration with the earth, sun, and rain as it miraculously transforms minerals, moisture, and light into fragrant cedar or blossoming pear, towering redwood or humble oak. As if it knew what it could be, the tiny seed sends a shoot down into the ground and another up toward the light. Against all odds, this tiny seed with its delicate shoots strives to become a tree, to complete the cycle, to become capable of producing new seeds, which can produce new trees. Individuals of every species, plant or animal, move steadfastly through progressive changes toward maturity. Everything that lives wants to grow, to unfold until it reaches full development.

How is growth accomplished? Through a series of changes. Without change there can be no development. The most

characteristic quality of life is change, and the inevitable flow of life from one event or state to another is an eternal truth. In the spring, buds appear on the trees, followed by leaves and flowers, and then the fruit. The fruit ripens and falls, the leaves dry and blow away, winter comes with its snowy silence. And in our own lives, we are always moving from place to place, from home to school to job, reading one book and then another, holding to one idea and then discarding it for another, spending time now with this person, and later, someone else.

These changes in our lives are not random or purposeless. Every choice we make is for more happiness, more knowledge, more love, more insight or understanding, more energy or peace. What person ever makes a conscious choice for *less* of life? Sure, our actions may not always yield the desired results, but that doesn't alter the motivation. The desire for expansion, for growth and development, belongs to the very nature of life, and it is the basis of all progress and improvement. It is a law of nature.

Many psychologists have observed and described this drive toward fulfillment. Alfred Adler, one of Freud's closest associates, spoke of "that mysterious creative power of life—that power which expresses itself in the desire to develop, to strive, and to achieve."<sup>1</sup>

And social psychologist and author Erich Fromm said, "Life has an inherent tendency to grow, to expand, to express potentialities."<sup>2</sup>

Abraham Maslow, one of the pioneers of the Human Potential Movement, wrote in *Toward a Psychology of Being*: "It looks

as if there were a single ultimate value for mankind, a far goal toward which all men strive. This is called variously by different authors, self-actualization, self-realization, integration, psychological health ... but they all agree that this amounts to realizing the potentialities of the person, that is to say, becoming fully human, everything that a person could become.”<sup>3</sup>

We all have within us, Maslow said, “a pressure toward unity of personality, toward spontaneous expressiveness, toward full individuality and identity, toward seeing the truth rather than being blind, toward being creative, toward being good ...”<sup>4</sup> Maslow asserted that we demonstrate this “pressure toward fuller and fuller being, more and more perfect actualization of [our] humanness in exactly the same naturalistic, scientific sense that an acorn may be said to be ‘pressing toward’ being an oak tree, or that a tiger can be observed to ‘push toward’ being tigerish.”<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, the psychologist Carl Rogers described what he saw as “the directional trend which is evident in all organic and human life—the urge to expand, extend, develop, mature—the tendency to express and activate all the capacities of the organism, or the self.”<sup>6</sup>

And Roberto Assagioli, the founder of psychosynthesis, believed: “Deep in each one of us there is an inner pull toward some higher form of life, an underlying but insistent urge that prompts us—like the flower which innately turns toward the sun—to look toward something greater than ourselves.”<sup>7</sup>

We all want to extend the range of our experience and accomplishments, to know more of life both horizontally and vertically, to expand the boundaries of our knowledge and strengthen our ability to act. Neither the mind nor the heart enjoys restrictions; the natural tendency of life is to overcome limitations, to break boundaries, and to move toward unbounded love, unbounded awareness, and unrestricted freedom of activity.

With all the exuberance of a passionate young man, British poet Rupert Brooke gave expression to this powerful urge, “that tearing hunger to do and do and do things. I want to walk 1000 miles, and write 1000 plays, and sing 1000 poems, and drink 1000 pots of beer, and kiss 1000 girls ...”<sup>8</sup>

It is the universal experience of humanity that no matter what a person may achieve in life, no matter what we may own, accomplish, see, or do, it doesn't seem to satisfy. I would dare to speculate that even if Brooke had achieved all his “1000s” (he died tragically during World War I at the age of 27), he would not have said, as so very few in any generation can ever say, “I am satisfied.” There's always something more to strive for. Taking this to the logical end, we can see that the direction of human life is toward the infinite: not only *more* happiness, *more* intelligence, and *more* energy are desired and required for fulfillment, but, ultimately, *the most*.

It would be a state, as Swiss-born French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau described it, “where the soul can find a resting-place secure enough to establish itself and concentrate its entire being there, with no need to remember the past or reach into the future ... and no other feeling of deprivation or enjoyment, pleasure or pain, desire or fear than

the simple feeling of existence”; or in Maharishi’s terms, a state of pure Being, unlimited by time and space. It is, Rousseau said, “a feeling that fills our soul entirely, [and] as long as this state lasts, we can call ourselves happy, not with a poor, incomplete and relative happiness such as we find in the pleasures of life, but with a sufficient, complete and perfect happiness which leaves no emptiness to be filled in the soul.”<sup>9</sup>

But is it possible to achieve the infinite in our finite human lifetime? Let’s look further.

### *OUR LARGEST UNTAPPED NATURAL RESOURCE*

As long as we have sufficient resources—energy, intelligence, knowledge, insight, skills—to act effectively and accomplish our goals, we can move ahead and fulfill our needs and aspirations one after another. But without adequate resources to meet the demands of living, we either fail to accomplish the goals to which we aspire, or we become exhausted straining to achieve them. Most of us today find that the demands and responsibilities of life are so great, and absorb so much of our time, energy, and mental-emotional reserves, that the charm and glory of life are lost in the mere maintenance of living. Frustration, tiredness, anxiety, drug abuse, alcoholism, and general dissatisfaction with life are found everywhere in the world, East and West, among old and young, rich and poor, celebrities and the unknown.

These signs of discontent and unhappiness, whatever their nature or their ostensible cause, are symptomatic. Starting in the late 1950s, Maharishi began speaking about the need for unfoldment of one’s full potential in order to meet the

increasing demands of living. Accurately reading the trends of the age, he predicted that the tempo of change and the complexity of living would continue to increase, and he warned—as I heard him say in 1966—that unless we take steps to harvest more of our inherent capabilities, we would become stressed and overwhelmed. It was at least another 10 to 15 years before the official pundits began speaking of an “epidemic of stress” spreading throughout society.

Maharishi calmly but persistently reasoned with his students and listeners, suggesting that we’ve been unable to attain our individual and collective goals, unable to live a fulfilled life and create a harmonious society, not because of any outward force, any enemy or obstacle, but because we haven’t been able to make use of our total potential. We haven’t fully mined our own innate human resources.

This was a rather radical way of thinking for those days, but that we do not even *approach* full utilization and development of our potential has become common knowledge since then. “If there is one statement true of every living person, it must be this: he hasn’t achieved his full potential,” said William Schutz of the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. “The latent abilities, hidden talents and undeveloped capacities for excellence and pleasure are legion. The consequences of this universal fate are many. Observers frequently refer to the human potential as our largest untapped natural resource.”<sup>10</sup>

Is it surprising that there is so much unhappiness in the world, with people making use of such a limited portion of their capabilities? It used to be said that we utilize perhaps 5 to 10 percent of our mental potential; now that we know that the

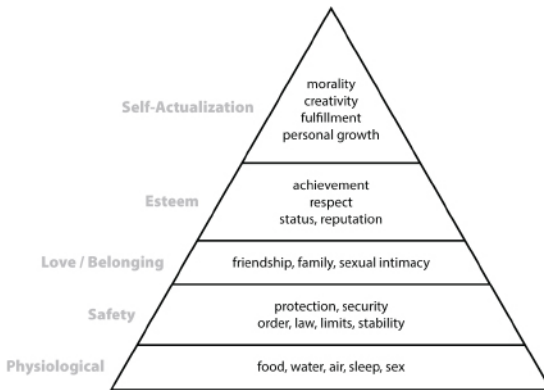
number of possible interconnections of the neurons in our brains is greater than the number of atoms in the universe, 10 percent may be a generous estimation. But even giving ourselves the benefit of the doubt, it is no surprise that the results of our actions are not thoroughly gratifying. Imagine trying to play an instrument (piano, guitar, or flute) with 10 percent of your fingers!

Some commentators on the human predicament have suggested that our goals and desires are the cause of our unhappiness. Seeing how helplessly many people are driven by their needs and wants, spiritual and religious teachers sometimes advocate “killing” desire in order to be free of it. While it is certainly true that our desires can sometimes lead us astray and get us into trouble, the fact is that all progress depends upon desires and aspirations and our ability to fulfill them. Evolution rides on fulfilled desire. From the achievement of one level of aspiration, we can move on to other, greater accomplishments. Reaching a goal can surely be satisfying for a moment or an hour, but for most of us, it’s a platform from which we redirect our ambitions and push off toward higher realms. As Aldous Huxley said, “Every ceiling, when reached, becomes a floor.” Frustration and suffering arise only if we are unable to progress. And restricted progress, Maharishi argued, is the result of incomplete unfoldment and deployment of our inborn creative faculties.

If you count yourself as a spiritual seeker, you may take issue with the above analysis. “The cycle of desire → action → achievement → fulfillment → new desire is endless,” you might say. “Where does it stop? How much stuff can you collect? How much power can you amass before you begin to see the futility of it all? Are rich people happier? Do they live

forever? Do they have happier marriages and families? And besides: isn't there something more important in life than fulfilling one's desires?"

All very true, but I believe people generally reach this understanding only when they have achieved a substantial amount of worldly comfort and success, as Abraham Maslow showed graphically with his hierarchy of needs.<sup>11</sup>



Those who are hungry do not perceive eating as futile; lonely people do not view the loving partnership they yearn for as ultimately inadequate for lasting happiness. Every aspiration for more, in whatever way we conceive of it, represents a step of personal evolution, a movement toward *the most*.

Eventually, there dawns the desire for the infinite itself, the spiritual longing that comes upon many who have, through the course of their evolution, discovered the inadequacy of acquiring more and more stuff, be it material goods, exciting adventures, information, or even imperial power! The widespread and very real spiritual yearning of our time may



be the paradoxical fruit of our successful material culture: we have attained and surpassed the material dreams of earlier generations, and we are still not satisfied. So where to turn? In religious terms, the answer would be, "To God." But we could simply say: "To the infinite"; to an expanded mind awake to the wholeness of life; to transcendence.

### *THE NEED OF THE AGE*

"The great and urgent need of these times is transcendence," Charles A. Reich wrote in *The Greening of America*. "The last two hundred years have fundamentally and irrevocably altered the terms of human existence. The price of survival is an appropriate consciousness and social order to go along with the revolution of science and technology.... The creation of a new consciousness is the most urgent of America's real needs."<sup>12</sup>

Since those words were written, the world has continued to change dramatically. What drives the global economy today is not "stuff," but information and our ability to synthesize and make sense of the tidal waves of it that come our way every day. More than ever, we need a way to tap into our inner reserves of intelligence, creativity, and energy to sharpen our minds, broaden our vision, and bring our expanded powers into the field of action. The solutions and strategies we devise and the actions we perform have to become smarter, more holistic (so they don't generate new problems in the solution of the old), and more effective. more in harmony with nature and conducive to the growth and well-being of all.

One critical lesson that many people have learned since the first version of this book appeared is the great value of changing our focus, both collectively and in our individual lives, from dealing almost exclusively with the outer world and trying to solve problems on their own terms, to the inner task of becoming, to say it in the simplest way, better people. We have created a mountain of problems using the resources we've had available. How can we solve them without expanding our powers?

As Einstein famously said, "Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them." I'm not suggesting that we don't need to act, that all our problems will be solved if we just sit and meditate. That's as unbalanced a view as its opposite: that all we need to do is act. We've tried action for centuries.

Maharishi had a wonderful analogy about this: when working in the kitchen, we can cut vegetables into cubes and strips, we can slice and dice, but at some point we also need to sharpen the knife. What's required now for progress, healing, and happiness is to strengthen the root of action—the individual, the person who acts—because the quality of action is determined by our inner status, particularly by the strength of the mind. If our minds are strong and creative and able to comprehend the many aspects of a given situation, action will be spontaneously effective. If the mind is capable of only limited vision, if it is dull, shallow, and lacks the ability to concoct creative solutions, then action will be restricted. We need to sharpen the knife.

*THE SOURCE OF THOUGHT*

Is it possible to make thinking more effective? That's what education is supposed to do, and no doubt it does to some extent, but it seems that more is required. What else could be done to strengthen and expand the capacity and power of the mind?

One avenue we could pursue to augment our mental powers involves—not surprisingly—the brain. TM has been found to enliven and activate the functioning of the brain in unique ways. During the practice, balanced or “coherent” activation of various areas of the brain—the left and right hemispheres, the front and the back—generates what researchers have referred to as “total brain function,” resulting in measured increases in intelligence, memory, problem-solving skills, and much more, which we will consider in some depth in later chapters.

Another way to approach “sharpening the knife” is to follow the logic we used in considering how to strengthen action, which was to look to its source. Thus, to strengthen thinking, to unfold more of the powers of the mind, the place to look would be the *source* of thought. But what is that? It's easy to see that thought underlies the field of action, that doing arises from thinking. But what is that field from which thought arises?

To analyze this properly, it is helpful to first consider the basic characteristics of thought. We know that thoughts *flow*. Our minds are endlessly creative, like a limitless library of streaming video, going virtually nonstop with words and images throughout the day and much of the night. Therefore, thoughts must have energy. Thoughts are not just mental abstractions—light shows playing on the screen of awareness.

They have a physical side; the thinking brain (and the dreaming brain, too) emits faint impulses of electrical energy that can be detected and measured. So one quality of thought is that it has energy.

Thoughts also take a direction. A thought may lead us to the library or to the bank. It may lead from confusion to understanding. With every thought, the mind expresses a choice; it is a constant searchlight of attention, endlessly gathering information, discerning and weighing alternatives, narrowing options, and making decisions. This directional, choosing aspect of the mind we could classify as *intelligence*. A thought, then, flows because of energy, and that flow takes a direction because of intelligence. Energy and intelligence are thus foundational to both action and thinking.

It is logical to assume that this energy and intelligence must have a source. University trained in science, Maharishi was well aware that the prevailing model of mind and mental events viewed consciousness as an *epiphenomenon*, a by-product of bioelectric or biochemical activity in the nervous system. However, in concert with leading-edge scientists who no longer find the material-only model adequate to explain the universe, Maharishi addressed the problem from the Vedic perspective, which considers consciousness not to be an epiphenomenon, but rather, fundamental. Max Planck, for example, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist often credited as being the founder of quantum theory, said, “I regard consciousness as fundamental; I regard matter as derivative from consciousness.”

*“A scientific world-view which does not profoundly come to terms with the problem of conscious minds can have no serious pretensions of completeness. Consciousness is part of our Universe. So any physical theory which makes no proper place for it falls fundamentally short of providing a genuine description of the world.”<sup>13</sup>*

— **SIR ROGER PENROSE**, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PHYSICIST

The ancient Vedic premise that the basis of creation is pure consciousness, physician and philosopher Deepak Chopra recently noted, “had little bearing on Western thought until the great quantum pioneers arrived at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their names are celebrated today—Albert Einstein, Erwin Schrödinger, Wolfgang Pauli, Werner Heisenberg—but what is much less well known is that almost all became mystics.”<sup>14</sup>

These great scientific minds discovered that what had always been considered the solid material world was in truth nothing but invisible energy fields, and that “those fields emerge from a place outside space and time.”<sup>15</sup>

Niels Bohr, another of the founders of quantum theory, declared, “Everything that we call real is made of things that cannot be regarded as real.”<sup>16</sup> And in his Nobel Prize speech of 1932, Heisenberg said that the atom “has no physical properties at all.”<sup>17</sup>

If thoughts are not just a play of measurable physical elements and detectible electrical currents, but are in fact a display of *consciousness*, and all the measurables are either a by-product or a concomitant or corresponding physical

equivalent, our question then becomes: From where does all the tremendous creative intelligence and energy come, which is ceaselessly bubbling up and being expressed in thought and action? Is there a storehouse of information and know-how that constantly maintains the human organism in all its complexity, keeping the body and mind functioning?

And what about seven *billion* minds and bodies? And what of the trillions of other lives that are coming into existence, growing, evolving? What cosmic computer, what super dynamo, keeps the whole thing going? Somewhere, at some intimate, fundamental level of life even deeper than thinking, a virtually unlimited source of intelligence and energy must exist.

Where would such a field lie? Where is it located, and how could we increase and maximize our contact with it?

### *TREES: A BRIEF HANDBOOK FOR GARDENERS*

If there is a tree in our garden with no leaves, fruit, or flowers growing even though it is springtime, we don't go from branch to branch and try to force growth. We don't water each individual bud, prop up the branches, and paint the leaves green. An interdepartmental committee of branches, leaves, and flowers will not help. We water the root. Why? Because, as the great 17th century educator J. A. Comenius pointed out, in "all the operations of nature, development is from within. A tree, that is nourished by the rain of heaven and the moisture of the earth, assimilates its nutriment, not through its outer bark, but through the pores of its inmost parts. On this account the gardener waters, not the branches, but the roots."<sup>18</sup> The problem of each branch is solved by

watering the root, by providing nourishment at the source of the structure of the tree.

The outer, obvious structure—trunk, branches, leaves—depends for its existence and sustenance upon an inner, less obvious aspect: the vast and intricate root system that reaches far under the ground, receiving nourishment and water from the soil and bringing it to all parts of the tree. It is this third aspect—the huge field of nourishment beyond the structure of the tree—that supports and gives rise to the life of the tree from beginning to end. It is the basis of the entire tree; trunk, leaves, fruit, and flowers are all expressions of the pure sap, the nourishment that is drawn in from the soil. The roots, then, serve as a link between the source of nourishment and its expression in the outer tree.

The wise gardener waters the root. The tender root tips, in touch with the soil, draw the necessary nourishment, which is distributed to all parts of the tree. This process—putting the outer structure into coordination with the source of nourishment—allows the tree to reach its full development of beauty and usefulness.

Human life has a similar structure: an outer field of action, an inner field of thought, and an innermost source of thought. The quality of a person's life—all our actions, achievements, and relations with the world—is as dependent upon our inner life (the mind) as the tree is upon its roots. But just as the real nourishment of the tree lies beyond the roots, in the soil, so also, beyond the finest, deepest level of thinking is the origin of thought, the vast reservoir of creative intelligence that is the basis of all thought and action. By consciously tapping

that source, we can spontaneously bring its richness to all the areas of our lives.

The tree of a person's life is composed of various branches: family, work, health, friendship, education, and so on. All these aspects of life, rather than being a source of strife and unhappiness, can bloom and grow to ripe fullness like the fruit and flowers of a healthy tree. The Book of Psalms beautifully describes such a life: "He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."<sup>16</sup>

A worthy goal for all of us. Now let's talk about how to achieve it.







## CHAPTER FOUR

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### REALITY: SCIENTIFIC AND SPIRITUAL

#### *THE OCEAN OF MIND*

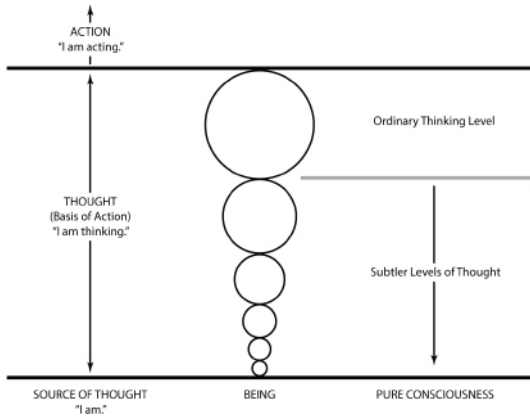
The technique of Transcendental Meditation is defined as a way of allowing the attention to move from the surface level of ordinary thought to increasingly subtle levels, until the subtlest level is reached and then transcended. The meditator's attention goes beyond (*transcend* means “to go beyond”) the finest level of thought to the *source* of thought—the pure, undifferentiated consciousness in which all thoughts and perceptions take shape.

Maharishi likened the occurrence of thought in the mind to the rise of a bubble from the bottom of a body of water. The bubble is very small at the bottom and grows as it rises, becoming increasingly large (as the water pressure diminishes) until it finally bursts at the surface.

At other times, he compared mind to an ocean. “The surface layers of the mind function actively while the deeper levels remain silent,” he wrote. “The surface level of the ocean of mind is called the conscious mind ... and it is at this level that thoughts are appreciated as thoughts.”<sup>1</sup>

A thought, at its source, is very subtle and refined, just a quiet impulse, almost imperceptible. As it rises through the

different levels of the mind, it becomes increasingly gross or tangible, until it is perceived at the ordinary thinking level. In TM practice, the meditator begins on the active, surface level of ordinary thought and follows the thought through increasingly finer stages to its source. The following figure illustrates the process:



### *SCIENCE, LAW, AND ULTIMATE REALITY*

Now let's define our terms more carefully. First of all, what are subtle and gross levels of thought? This has nothing to do with the conceptual meaning or content of the thought, but with the degree of manifestation—is it a tiny bubble (subtle), or one that is closer to the surface (gross)? In TM terminology, a subtle thought is not one that is complex or intellectually intricate; it is just quiet.

All sciences begin their observations on the gross, surface level of life, the phenomenal, external aspects, and proceed toward the subtle. From the effect level to the causal level, from the surface level to the deeper levels, is the direction of

scientific investigation. It's the way we learn how things work. From observing how people walk and talk, we begin to look deeper within, to their motivations and past history, to the biological structure of their lives, to their chemical or genetic constitution.

A physicist begins on the surface level of an object and then looks deeper, to the molecular, atomic, subatomic level. The goal of this search in all sciences, whether physics, chemistry, psychology, biology, botany or any other, is to uncover the ultimate nature of life, to find out what life is, what humanity is, what the universe is, to locate the source, the stuff of creation. Intuitively, many great scientific minds have long believed that the end point of all investigation will be the discovery of a Theory of Everything, a Unified Field that is the fountainhead of all that is. And if we haven't quite gotten there yet (some scientists think we have), we are getting very, very close.

The investigations of the various sciences have revealed that there are different levels of creation, all present simultaneously. Consider a leaf. It has its gross, obvious, outer level—color, texture, shape—available to our sense perception. But we know that if we put it under a microscope, we discover that the leaf, beyond its surface appearance, has a cellular level that looks utterly different from the external structure. Finer than that, it has a molecular structure. Going still deeper, we arrive at the atomic level, then at the subatomic and the quantum level of infinitesimals, where anything resembling matter or structure dissolves into energy, and the energy, in turn, reveals itself as perturbations or momentary condensations in an underlying field.

As Einstein said nearly a century ago, “There is no place in this new kind of physics for both the field and matter, for the field is the only reality.”<sup>2</sup>

All these strata coexist. At one stage of our investigation, we would quite accurately conclude that the leaf, which seems to have certain dimensions and properties, is really nothing but molecules. But penetrating deeper, the whole molecular structure dissolves like a movie fade, and we would say that the true nature of the leaf is atoms in motion. And so on. At each level, the perception is valid and correct. It does not invalidate the previous perception. The fact that there are atoms does not preclude the existence of molecules or cells. But it does indicate that none of these levels of reality is the *ultimate* level—that these are not the ultimate perceptions of the essential nature of the object.

At our current stage of knowledge, scientists believe that the subatomic level of life is omnipresent; it is present everywhere throughout material creation, at every moment, in ourselves and in every object, even though we are not ordinarily aware of it. If we could continue looking deeper (which at this point we can do only in theory), we would slip out of the realm of all boundaries and structures and enter unboundedness: the unmanifest, unexpressed Unified Field at the basis of creation. It is reasonable to assume that *some* level of life, finer than the finest levels of matter and energy, must be the ultimate, the source of all the tremendous energy and all the natural laws that give rise to the immensity of creation. This field would be omnipresent, locatable in sun, sea, stone, or flower, and most important for our investigation, in ourselves.

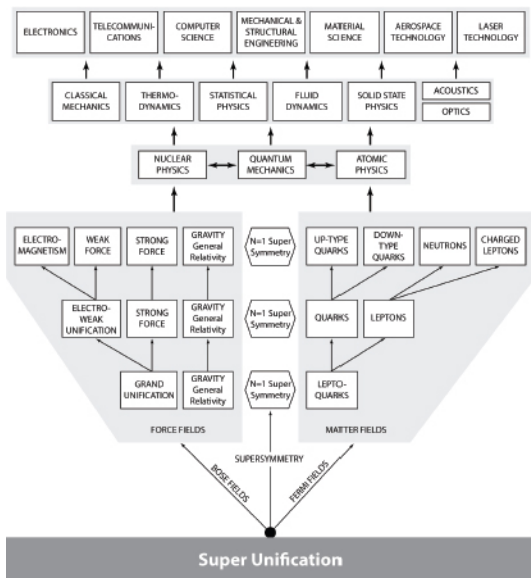
If this field lies within us, how would we know? How would we gain knowledge of it? The same way we know about *anything*. Knowledge of each level of the objective, material world has been gained by extending our faculties of experience, our powers of direct perception. A theory may point to something, may suggest the existence of some law or level of life, before it is verified by observation or application, but it is ultimately only through direct perception and measurement that we can be said to truly know anything about the physical world.

The basic mechanism of experience, of perception or gaining knowledge, necessitates a subject and an object, an experiencer and an object of experience—plus the faculties of perception that link the two. When you see or touch a table, you are the experiencer, or subject, and the table is the object of experience, brought to your awareness by the sense of sight or touch, through the nervous system and the brain.

The same mechanism operates in thinking, where there is the experiencer, who thinks, and the object of experience, the thought. Thoughts come and go by the hundreds and thousands, day after day, but the thinker, *I*, remains. A thought, however abstract and intangible, is experienced just like any of the more concrete objects of manifest creation. A thought is just as much a part of reality as a leaf or a table, a subway or an elephant, a planet or a quark. If we could systematically trace a thought to increasingly subtle, quieter levels just as we looked into the leaf and found cells, molecules, and atoms with our microscope, we would eventually arrive at the source of the thought.

And since thought is an energy impulse, a part of creation, it is at least conceivable that by consciously observing the subtle levels of a thought and then remaining alert as it fades completely and dissolves into its source, we could directly perceive the ultimate constituent of reality. This realm of life—as the living origin of all creation, the wellspring from which all of creation rises—would have to be an unlimited field of creative potential and organizing power.

“Is this field of unity at the basis of life’s diversity factor fiction? Modern science has peeled away layer after layer of the onion of existence, exploring deeper levels of natural law, deeper levels of nature: from macroscopic to microscopic, from the molecular, atomic, nuclear, and sub-nuclear world of quarks and leptons, to the electroweak unified world, grand unified world, and the super-unified world, ten million million million times smaller than the atomic nucleus. At this fountainhead, this core level of nature’s functioning, we see the fundamental unity at the basis of the diverse laws of nature governing the universe.



## Unified Field

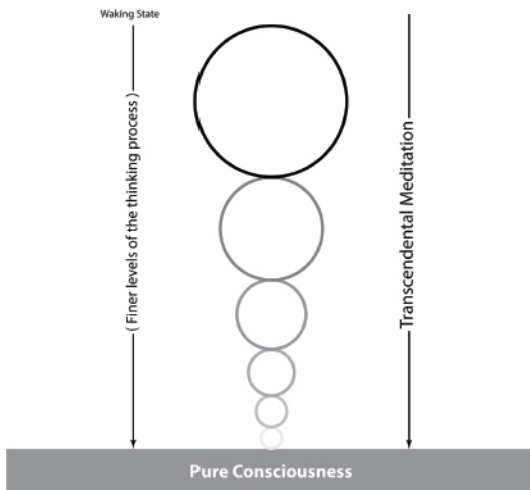
of all the laws of nature

“At that level all four forces—gravity, the strong force, the radioactive force, the electro-magnetic force—are all one. And all the so-called particles, the quarks and leptons on which they act, are also all one. At that level there’s just a single unified ocean of existence. And all the particles and forces that build the universe are just little ripples on the surface of this ocean.

## CONSCIOUSNESS

Transcendental Meditation allows the conscious mind to identify itself with the Unified Field in pure consciousness





## Unified Field

of all the laws of nature

“This understanding of the core unity of life is not the sole province of the world’s mathematical physicists. It has been the cherished experience of generations. Techniques of meditation have been designed to allow people to dive within and experience, as easily and efficiently as possible, deeper levels of mind, deeper levels of human intelligence corresponding to the deeper levels of the intelligence of nature.”

— **John Hagelin**, quantum physicist and educator

We know that energy is present everywhere; science has revealed that everything we once thought of as matter is ultimately formless energy. Even a rock, which seems on the surface to be the epitome of inertia and inactivity, is humming with tremendous lively energy if we examine it on a subtler

level. Excite the atomic structure of some “inert” rock such as uranium, and you can produce an explosion of immense magnitude. So energy is found everywhere, even in the apparently lifeless aspects of creation, and the more deeply we penetrate, the more powerful that energy is.

*“The Transcendental Meditation technique is an effortless procedure for allowing the excitations of the mind gradually to settle down until the least excited state of mind is reached. This is a state of inner wakefulness with no object of thought or perception, just pure consciousness aware of its own unbounded nature. It is wholeness, aware of itself, devoid of differences, beyond the division of subject and object—transcendental consciousness. It is a field of all possibilities, where all creative potentialities exist together, infinitely correlated but as yet unexpressed. It is a state of perfect order, the matrix from which all the laws of nature emerge, the source of creative intelligence.”<sup>3</sup>*

— MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI

We also know that life expresses intelligence on all levels. Everything proceeds according to law—from the motions of the galaxies to the whirling of electrons in their orbits. Apricot seeds do not grow into Toyotas. We’re not adults first and then infants. There is order; there are intelligible structures and dynamic, predictable sequences and processes in operation on all levels of creation. This is the underlying assumption of science: that there are natural laws, which can be discerned and then applied. “Scientific research,” Einstein said, “is based on the idea that everything that takes place is determined by laws of nature.”<sup>4</sup>

As the astronomer Forest Ray Moulton wrote:

To the astronomer the most remarkable and interesting thing about that part of the physical universe with which he has become acquainted is not its vast extent in space, nor the number and great masses of its stars, nor the violent forces that operate in the stars, nor the long periods of astronomical time, but ... the perfect orderliness of the universe and the majestic succession of the celestial phenomena. From the tiny satellites in the solar system to the globular clusters, the galaxy, and exterior galaxies there is no chaos, there is nothing haphazard, and there is nothing capricious. The orderliness of the universe is the supreme discovery in science.<sup>5</sup>

Because everything that exists proceeds according to natural laws, the deepest level of life, the *source* of life at the basis of creation, must be a field of intelligence (or order, or information) just as it must be a field of energy. Maharishi sometimes referred to it as the *Constitution of the Universe*: “the eternal, non-changing basis of Natural Law and the ultimate source of the order and harmony displayed throughout creation.”<sup>6</sup> And because it gives rise to the whole complex and immense creation in all its diversity, its creative potential and power must be unfathomably great.

“*ALL THIS IS THAT*”

Maharishi sometimes called this the field of *Being*, the pure, undifferentiated existence that underlies everything that exists. Absolute and eternal in nature, it is, he taught, a field of pure consciousness, pure awareness awake within itself. The source or “home base” of all the laws of nature that

govern the coming-into-being and evolution of all things, Being expresses itself in every form, just as hydrogen and oxygen appear as water, ice, or steam, or as the same clear, crystalline sap expresses itself as the hard bark, the green leaf, or the tender petal.

Over his 50-year teaching career, speaking in different contexts with different groups, in order to make his point clear, Maharishi came up with a variety of synonyms for Being: *creative intelligence, the Absolute, the unmanifest, the home of all knowledge, the total potential of Natural Law*, and more. All such terms point toward the same fundamental reality that in physics would be designated as the Unified Field. He also used a number of different expressions for our *experience* of Being, such as *pure consciousness, pure awareness, unbounded awareness, unboundedness*, and so on. In line with Maharishi's usage, you will see most of these terms used interchangeably in this book.

Like ocean waves that are not *separate* from the sea but simply the sea in endless motion, everything in the relative field of life—the world of ever-changing phenomena with which we are all familiar—is nothing but various manifestations of Being. Even as it assumes an infinite number of forms and qualities in what may be an infinity of galaxies, universes, and dimensions, Being remains absolute and unchanging. As gentle rolling waves, whitecaps, and tsunamis are all nothing other than the waters of the sea, so all the endless objects and happenings in any neighborhood of the cosmos are expressions of Being, moving within Itself as Itself.

A well-known phrase from the Upanishads expresses this: “I am That, Thou art That, all this is nothing but That.” Or, as the last phrase is sometimes translated: “That alone is.”

In light of what modern physics tells us about the structure of life, such a statement is far from extreme. As discussed a few pages back, the existence of various levels of matter, from subtle to gross, does not invalidate the reality of any of those levels. We still speak quite freely about tables and chairs, knowing all along (if we stop to think about it) that they are composed of molecules, atoms, subatomic “particles,” and energy fields, and are really more than 90 percent empty space. Similarly, we can still consider all the changing phenomena of life as real, but we can also begin to understand—and to experience—that abstract, pure Being is the essential constituent of all that is.

Silent and unexpressed, eternally the same, a field of infinite potentiality, this field of pure creative intelligence is the source and basis of creation, the source of life and thought. Although it is present throughout creation, in its pure, unmanifest essence it lies beyond the realm of relative existence—subtler than the subtlest field of life and inaccessible to ordinary perception. That is why it is said to be “transcendental,” and the technique to experience it is termed “Transcendental Meditation.”

Perhaps you’ve noticed an apparent contradiction. I’ve said that Being is transcendental, and also that it is omnipresent. How can that be? Logically, if it is omnipresent—present here, there, and everywhere—then it cannot be transcendental or “beyond”; if transcendent, how can it be “here,” too? The answer to this puzzle is that it is only transcendental to our

ordinary perception and experience. We move around in the world and do not see it or even know of it. But through the process of transcending in meditation, allowing our awareness to move from the surface levels to the subtlest and beyond, we encounter it; know its reality; and gradually over time come to find it not just in the moments of expanded awareness and silence in meditation, but locate it, spontaneously and innocently, in whatever our attention falls on in daily life. We discover, little by little, that far from transcendental, Being is everywhere. It is everything, and everything is it.

Think back to the example of the ocean. Our consciousness is analogous to the ocean, with waves of thought on the surface and silence below. But it is all consciousness. Thoughts are not “things” existing in their own right, they are vibrating consciousness, waves or perturbations of the field of pure consciousness. When we meditate, the waves settle, thoughts momentarily vanish, and consciousness is revealed in its pure state.

Being or pure consciousness is what we locate when we trace a thought to its source; it’s what we discover when consciousness of objects diminishes and our awareness rests within itself. This is the knower, the subject or pure consciousness—the innermost level of one’s own Self or Being.

As the philosopher Alan Watts said, “What you are basically, deep, deep down, far, far in, is simply the fabric and structure of existence itself.”<sup>7</sup>

The Self is not to be seen, for It has no visible form.

Yet, when the mind becomes clear, and the heart becomes pure,  
then can the Self be known.

And those who know It enjoy eternity.

— Katha Upanishad

Why is it that we don't ordinarily experience pure consciousness or Being if it's the essential nature of our minds? It's because we are always conscious of *something*, whether a thought, a feeling, a sensation, or a sense perception. Rather than being focused inward, our attention is projected outward. The mind, as pure consciousness, is the experiencer and does not experience itself. It is like the eye, which sees all the changing phenomena of the world—movement and play of light and shadow, form and color, all the drama of life—but does not see itself. Although it lies at the root of all existence, consciousness or Being is not ordinarily perceived in its purity.

But throughout the ages, great philosophers and seers of the truth of life in every tradition have experienced this fundamental field of pure existence and bequeathed us a record of what they found. The idea that “the Kingdom of Heaven is within you” is certainly not a new one. In religious terms, Being could be equated with God—not the personalized aspect of God as we in the West generally conceive of the divine reality, but the more fundamental, impersonal Godhead of the great mystics and visionary seers.

Meister Eckhart, the 13th-century Christian theologian, expressed a very Vedic appreciation of the ultimate source or essence of life when he wrote: “The One descends into everything and into each single thing, yet remaining the One

that unites what is distinct.... [T]his ground is a simple stillness which is immovable in itself. But all things are moved by this immovability and all the forms of life are conceived by it.”<sup>8</sup>

Several beautiful, poetic descriptions of this ultimate field of life appear in the ancient Chinese classic, the Tao Te Ching, where the word *Tao* may be equated with Being.

There was something formless yet complete,  
That existed before heaven and earth;  
Without sound, without substance,  
Dependent on nothing, unchanging,  
All pervading, unfailing,  
One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven<sup>9</sup>  
Tao is all-pervading and its use is inexhaustible!  
Fathomless!  
Like the fountainhead of all things.<sup>10</sup>  
It is there within us all the while;  
Draw upon it as you will, it never runs dry.<sup>11</sup>

The American poet Walt Whitman seemed acutely aware of the ultimate nature of life, the fathomless field of pure Being:

O Thou transcendent,  
Nameless, the fiber and the breath,



Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou center of them,

Thou mightier center of the true, the good, the loving,

Thou moral, spiritual fountain—affection’s source—thou reservoir ...

Thou pulse—thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,

That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,

Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space ... <sup>12</sup>

Buddhist writings, too, are filled with descriptions of Being, but the terminology is somewhat different. Consider this commentary by Yoshito S. Hakeda, the translator of *The Awakening of Faith* by the poet and philosopher Ashvaghosha: “The all-inclusive Reality, the unconditional Absolute, is called Suchness. What is real is Suchness alone; all else is unreal, a mere appearance only, because it is relative, being devoid of independent self-nature or own-being.”<sup>13</sup>

When Ashvaghosha says the relative is not real, he doesn’t mean it isn’t there, he means that it has no reality *of its own*, as a wave has no reality independent of the ocean. The great Jewish scholar and teacher Schneur Zalman, founder of the Chabad school of Hasidism, shared a similar insight: “The reason that all created things seem to have existence and being in their own right is that we can neither conceive nor see, with our physical eyes, the Force of God which is in the created world.... There is really nothing in existence besides God.”<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, the founder of Hasidism, the Ba'al Shem Tov, said: "There is nothing in the whole universe except God himself, who fills the whole world ... the whole of reality is only the one God himself."<sup>15</sup>

In the Preface to his translation of the Bhagavad Gita, Maharishi spoke of the field of Being and what happens to human life when knowledge of it is lost:

The truth ... is by its very nature independent of time and can therefore never be lost. When, however, man's vision becomes one-sided and he is caught by the binding influence of the phenomenal world to the exclusion of the absolute phase of Reality, when he is thus confined within the ever-changing phases of existence, his life loses stability and he begins to suffer.<sup>16</sup>

But, Maharishi was quick to point out:

When suffering grows, the invincible force of nature moves to set man's vision right and establish a way of life which will again fulfill the high purpose of his existence.<sup>17</sup>

### *TWO HUNDRED PERCENT OF LIFE*

Thus, our life has two aspects: the inner, unmanifest, unchanging, pure field of Being, and the outer, ever-changing field of activity and experience. The outer without the inner is like a building without a foundation, weak and baseless. But what good is the foundation without the building? Wherever we may live, whatever our goals may be, if we are to gain fulfillment, we have to achieve it by living both these aspects of life simultaneously.

“Man is born to live a perfect life,” Maharishi taught, “encompassing the values of the transcendental Absolute—unlimited energy, intelligence, power, peace, and bliss—together with the unlimited values of the world of multiplicity in relative existence.”<sup>18</sup>

Just as the growth of a tree is dependent upon its hidden, inner aspect, so the growth and success of our lives depends on our inner development, our state of consciousness. As Meister Eckhart said, “People should think less about what they ought to do and more about what they ought to be. If only their being were good, their works would shine forth brightly.”<sup>19</sup> It is timeless wisdom.

Jesus expressed it this way: “Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and all else shall be added unto you.” It is only because we have had no sure way to reach the “Kingdom of Heaven,” no maps locating it, no guide, no vehicle, that so many of us have failed to arrive.

### *THE NATURAL TENDENCY*

The purpose of Transcendental Meditation, then, is to connect the outer field of activity with the unbounded potentiality of our inner being, for the purpose of enriching all aspects of life. TM is not a philosophy or a religion, but a practical technique, a “technology.” The effectiveness of the practice derives from the fact that it utilizes the powerful natural tendency of the mind to move always in the direction of greater happiness. As we saw above, “all creatures great and small” exhibit a progressive tendency, an inherent movement toward fulfillment. The desire for more, for evolution, is

grounded in the nature of life. It is the basis of all growth and progress.

We are affected by this natural tendency of the mind numerous times a day. A student sitting over a difficult problem or a boring text finds his mind drifting to a song playing down the hall, the memory of a special event, or the anticipation of a weekend excursion. A woman sitting in front of her office computer hears a conversation taking place across the room in which two co-workers are praising her work in the organization; automatically her attention shifts to pick up the details. No effort is needed to turn the attention; it shifts by itself. And yet, creative artists, musicians, dancers, lovers, athletes, and many others find that when something is wholly satisfying in the moment, absorption is complete and the mind doesn't stray.

The technique of TM utilizes this natural tendency of the mind. Just as the attention will shift from one melody to a more pleasing one, effortlessly and spontaneously, so the mind will flow toward increasingly subtle states of thought if it is given the opportunity.

The habit of the mind has been to search outside, to turn toward externals in its quest for happiness. But nothing in the relative, ever-changing field of life is sufficient to give the mind the satisfaction it is seeking. A film or a piece of beautiful music, a face or a sunset, may hold our attention for a while, but soon the mind becomes restless, discontent. It wanders off again in search of something more. Observing this, many have concluded that humankind is plagued with a "monkey mind" that cannot stay still.

Maharishi had a different take on this notion. The mind surely wanders, he said, but when it finds the satisfaction it is looking for, it will come to rest and be at peace. As other great teachers have said before him, Maharishi explained that only within, in the unchanging field of life which he called Being or pure consciousness, will the mind find fulfillment of its quest. Only Being—an unbounded ocean of energy, creativity, and happiness, a field of eternal fullness—can satisfy the mind.

*“We have the same qualities as God, just like a drop of the ocean has the same qualities as the whole ocean. Everybody’s looking for something and we are it. We don’t have to look anywhere—it’s right there within ourselves.”<sup>20</sup>*

— **GEORGE HARRISON**, SINGER, SONGWRITER,  
FORMER BEATLE

In order to experience the field of Being, it is only necessary to “take a correct angle,” and allow the attention to move within. The laws of our own nature carry us to fulfillment. It’s like diving into a pool of water. The diver only needs to take a correct angle and let go. The laws of nature—in this case, gravity—complete the dive. Similarly, during the process of TM, the mind, motivated by its own natural tendency to move in the direction of the infinite—that is, toward greater happiness and satisfaction—is drawn by the increasing charm of subtler levels of awareness until it reaches the field of pure consciousness.

The mind settles; the body relaxes. Thoughts gradually become quieter as the mental agitation, the waves on the surface of the ocean of mind, begin to subside. And then ...

silence. The boundaries of thought and perception give way to unboundedness. Pure awareness. Inner peace.

What is that like? Here is British poet and philosopher Edward Carpenter, who apparently had this completely natural experience a century ago:

The Man at last lets Thought go; he glides below it into the quiet feeling, the quiet sense of his own identity with the self of other things—of the universe. He glides past the feeling into the very identity itself, where a glorious all-consciousness leaves no room for separate self-thoughts or emotions. He leans back in silence on the inner being, and bars off for a time every thought, every movement of the mind, every impulse to action, or whatever in the faintest degree may stand between him and That; and so there comes to him a sense of absolute repose, a consciousness of immense and universal power, such as completely transforms the world for him.<sup>21</sup>

The one difference between Carpenter's experience and what a person does during TM lies in his expression, "bars off for a time every thought," for in TM practice there is no attempt to block or stop the flow of thoughts. The mind floats on thought, enjoys perceiving finer, fainter impulses of the thought, and then transcends to the experience of *no thought*. No effort is involved.

Here is the same basic experience recounted by a TM meditator:

I would settle down; it would be very quiet ... and then I would transcend, and there would just be a sort of complete

silence, void of content. The whole awareness would turn in, and there would be no thought, no activity, and no perception, yet it was somehow comforting. It was very natural and innocent.

Bede Griffiths, a Catholic monk who went to India in the mid-20th century and lived in an ashram, spoke of it this way: “When we pass beyond the mind with its measuring faculties, with its categories of time and space, we find the very ground of the universe. There all things are not dead matter as Western science has told us for so long. They are life and intelligence.”<sup>22</sup>

“At one point I learned Transcendental Meditation,” said Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Color Purple*. “It took me back to the way that I naturally was as a child growing up way in the country.... I was in that state of oneness with creation, and it was as if I didn’t exist except as a part of everything. And that is where meditation can help you understand yourself.”<sup>23</sup>

“The ability is there,” said Maharishi. “The field of the Absolute Being is there. It is only necessary to begin to experience it.” The entire process is spontaneous and automatic. The mind goes inward to experience the unity of life, and it comes out to enjoy the multiplicity of relative creation, enhanced by the values of the inner Absolute.

In this way, the two wings of life—the relative and the Absolute—are integrated. The eternally seeking nature of the mind finds its fulfillment in the eternally unchanging, innermost essence of what we are. Thus, the technique is entirely natural and based on the very structure of life.

This union of the two sides of life, the ever-changing and the never-changing, the limited and the unbounded, is the accomplishment of *Yoga* in the true sense of the word. *Yoga* is a Sanskrit word that means “union”—not the union of the fingers and the toes or the forehead and the knee, but something far more grand: the union of the Absolute and the relative within our own life. This integration of life’s inner and outer phases is an effortless process, involving neither concentration nor control. But what *does* it involve? We’ll consider that next.

*“Meditation is a practice of transformative spirituality. Why? Because it challenges who we think we are at the most fundamental level. It reveals to us an ever-present dimension of reality beyond mind, time, and our embodiment through which we can recognize that we are not some object clinging for security to the surface of this spinning planet. No, we are WHAT IS. The infinite unmovable perfection of Being, the ground of everything, itself.”*<sup>24</sup>

— ELIZABETH DEBOLD, “THE ULTIMATE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE FOR WOMEN”

*TM: HOW YOU DO IT, HOW YOU DON'T*

Meditation in the 21st century has become ubiquitous. Articles frequently appear touting its benefits, and it is recommended by doctors, psychotherapists, sports coaches and trainers, health writers, yoga teachers, and, it seems, half of one’s friends. Classes have sprung up everywhere, and countless books, CDs, and podcasts offer instruction. But most people are completely unaware that “meditation” encompasses a basket of many different practices, from



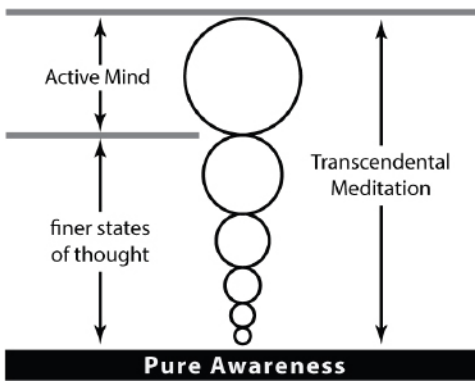
“mindfulness” to guided imagery, from TM to the Relaxation Response. You might think—and many people do—that all of these are interchangeable, virtually the same. But they are not the same at all, and a growing body of research is demonstrating significant differences both in technique and in the effects they have on body and mind.

A number of American universities, including UCLA, Yale, The University of Oregon, Maharishi University of Management (MUM), and the University of Wisconsin—Madison, have laboratories dedicated solely to researching meditation, notably by brain mapping and imaging using fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) and EEG (electroencephalography).

It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the various types of meditation in any depth, but let’s look briefly at a few examples.

**Contemplation.** From the earliest days of his teaching activity, Maharishi explained that TM is neither concentration nor what he called “contemplation.” In the Catholic tradition, the term *contemplation* is used for the state of absorption in the presence of God, beyond verbal prayer or intellectual analysis—much like how Maharishi describes transcendence. But he defines *contemplation* in almost the exact opposite way, to mean, essentially, thinking about something. The topic can be something profound and elevating, perhaps religious or spiritual ... about love, the nature of God, the interconnectedness of all life ... and it can involve the quiet exploration of a meaningful theme.

Such a practice can be enjoyable, enriching, and full of insights. But it is still thinking, which distinguishes it from Transcendental Meditation which aims to transcend or go beyond thought. Contemplation essentially utilizes whatever portion of the mind is already available to us. It is like swimming on the surface of the ocean of mind. TM is a *vertical* process, opening or expanding awareness to deeper levels. It is like diving to the depths of the ocean.



**Concentration.** TM is also not concentration. This distinction is very important, because the great majority of “meditation” practices revolve around the attempt to concentrate, focus, or in some way control the mind. They ask the meditator to maintain steady focus on an object, whether external (such as a candle flame) or internal (a thought or visual image).

Your practice would begin at the big bubble of surface thinking, or something even less subtle, an outer sense perception, and you would try to hold your attention there, not letting it stray, not letting thoughts come. The interesting thing about concentration, in contrast to the effortless flow of the mind during the TM technique, is that if you actually

succeeded in holding the mind still, you would most likely *prevent* transcending! The goal is not to stop the mind from moving, but to allow it to move from the surface to the depths.

**Mindfulness.** A third genre of meditative practices is “mindfulness.” Here we run into problems of terminology that make it almost impossible to meaningfully compare it with TM. Some practices known as mindfulness bear little resemblance to the sitting-down, eyes-closed practice of TM: practitioners may walk and attempt to remain aware of walking, to feel the motion of their body, the crunch of the gravel path underfoot. Or they may sit, and try to stay in the present moment, not drifting into memories, projections of desires into the future, fantasizing, planning, and so on. They may aim to monitor or witness whatever is happening ... to be aware of the body and how it feels, the pressure of the floor or the chair, the temperature of the air, external sounds or movements in the room if they come to attention, thoughts or emotions as they drift through the mind, or to watch the breath without any attempt to regulate it. That is, simply remaining “mindful.”

There are other techniques as well. Each, no doubt, has its own “signature”—its typical physiology and brain-wave patterns—just as TM does. So what is needed, if there is to be a meaningful comparison between the methodologies and benefits of mindfulness and TM, is a lot more research on mindfulness practices to match the more than 40 years and hundreds of studies on TM. That research is under way. For now, please just note that the practices outlined above are *not* how TM works.

**Positive Thinking.** Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was one of the premier positive thinkers of all time. His goal was not merely to bring meditation to all people everywhere—a grand enough aim!—but to establish peace in the world “for all times to come.” He spoke about the inner blossoming of meditators being sufficient to establish an “Age of Enlightenment” or to create “Heaven on Earth.” One year, he announced a plan to open 3,600 teaching centers around the globe. Another year, the plan was to create and open a university. “Think of something great to do, and do it,” he told his students. “Never think of failure at all.” This is quintessential positive thinking.

However, the *actual practice* of TM does not in any way resemble positive thinking. Positive thoughts are certainly more uplifting than negative thoughts, but they are just thoughts—not the unlimited creative intelligence at the source of all thoughts. Cultivating a positive attitude is surely more useful than living in the clouds of self-doubt. “I can do it!” is more inspirational than “I’ll never be good enough.” Confidence is a good thing, and many of us are deficient in it. But rather than trying to convince ourselves, it is far better to actually acquire a state of mind from which we can project an intention that *will* manifest.

The early proponents of positive thinking may well have been advanced souls, able to station their awareness in pure consciousness. To do so is part of our potential as humans, and Transcendental Meditation, while highly effective, is not the only way to get “there.” Naturally able to do it, they assumed others could, too. But the fact is that most of us simply cannot bring our minds to that deep, silent level without an effective technique. Many people who grasp the conceptual truth that there is an infinite source of creative

power within us that we can tap into and use, have become frustrated because their wishes have not quickly become fulfilled. The real “secret” is to transcend, to open our awareness to the field where all the laws of nature silently reside in a unified, unexpressed state. With regular practice, we become capable of living and thinking from that level, projecting our thoughts from that realm of unlimited potential.



As a TM teacher, I have sometimes taught people who had tried or even seriously practiced other meditation methods for some time. Sarah Wilson, an Australian journalist, TV personality, and former host of *MasterChef Australia*, the highest-rated program in Australian TV history, said she had “tried just about every form of meditation. None of them really stuck. I used to get stupendously tense meditating, often reduced to tears ... that’s how much they failed to ‘stick.’ About two years ago I tried TM.... TM very literally Changed. My. Life.... I was skeptical. But six weeks after I started, I landed the *MasterChef* gig. I meditated in the car outside before going in for my audition. The casting team said my certainty and poise got me the job.”<sup>25</sup>

Before being instructed in TM, people sometimes imagine that it must be difficult, demanding more concentration than they think they have, but nothing could be further from the truth. Those who have advocated techniques of concentration or control of the mind have not, Maharishi asserted, fully understood the *nature* of the mind. They observed the mind wandering, but did not grasp that it was wandering for a reason—in search of fulfillment. If we observed the flight of a

honeybee from flower to flower, without realizing that it is searching for nectar in order to make honey, we might conclude that it just flies around aimlessly. Similarly, the mind does not just jump from thought to thought aimlessly; it only wanders in search of greater happiness until it finds what it is looking for.

Some folks may believe that they're not educated or knowledgeable enough to learn, but this, too, is a false assumption. Since the technique is not a matter of rational, intellectual thought or analysis, no particular background or educational achievement helps or hinders.

The key point here is that there is no new skill to learn, nothing to master. "What I am emphasizing," Maharishi said, "is the possibility of elimination of stress and strain, worries and suffering from daily life, and that *with the material with which everyone is born*. I am saying that the mind is wandering by nature because it is progressive under the impulse of evolution induced by the cosmic intelligence responsible for the creation and evolution of everything. This tendency of the mind to flow toward more and more growth, toward fulfillment, is quite enough for the mind to meet the pool of Bliss lying within."<sup>26</sup>

Because TM is a spontaneous process of direct perception, faith or belief is also irrelevant. Whether people are believers or skeptics, if they follow the directions of the teacher, the process works, quite automatically.

The technique, then, involves neither contemplation nor concentration, nor is it based on one's acceptance of any ideas or philosophy. It is not religious, and is not helped or

hindered by skepticism or faith in its efficacy. It is just a practice, a mental exercise—natural, simple, and innocent—utilizing the innate tendency of the mind to move in the direction of greater enjoyment. Because this tendency is present in everyone, anyone can practice TM with success and derive its benefits.

However, although it is easy, the technique is a highly specialized and delicate process which, for maximum benefit, must be learned from a qualified instructor. The practice involves thinking—not chanting aloud—a specific sound, called a *mantra*, chosen for each person at the time of instruction. During TM, the mantra is used as the object of attention. The meditator is not at all concerned with any meaning the sound may or may not have; dwelling on meaning would be a type of contemplation and would keep one's awareness at a more superficial level. It is the sound quality—along with the specific way the mantra is employed—that is conducive to producing the deep rest and refined awareness characteristic of TM, and that generates the coherent brain waves that I'll talk about in detail in coming chapters.

Maharishi defined a *mantra* as “a sound, the effects of which are known.” It is common knowledge that sounds have different effects. Sound waves, being a physical reality (albeit a subtle one), strike against objects of creation, or fall upon the human nervous system and have various effects—some positive, some negative. Some sounds can shatter glass; some music can be soothing; some can make us want to get up and dance. Research has shown that different music played to plants under controlled conditions where factors such as temperature, nourishment, and light were equivalent produced

different effects: some music accelerated growth; other music actually killed the plants.<sup>27</sup> The mantras used in the Transcendental Meditation program come from the thousands-of-years-old Vedic tradition of India. They are time-tested and known to produce effects that are life supporting on every level.

The mantra must be suitable for the individual. Just as a doctor analyzes a person's blood to determine the correct "type" before giving a transfusion, the teacher of TM evaluates certain specific criteria, ascertained during an interview with the prospective meditator, before selecting the appropriate mantra.

At least equally as important, the mantra's use must be properly imparted, in a step-by-step procedure determined by the student's rate of learning.

"The practice of Transcendental Meditation has to be imparted by personal instruction," Maharishi explained. "It cannot be imparted through a book." That's because the delicate nature of the technique, and differences in the rate of learning of each person, require that the guide be present at every step of the way to ensure that the technique is learned correctly.

Maharishi emphasized this during my training as a teacher, and my experience upheld the truth of what he said. On several occasions, someone came to the TM center for instruction, learned the technique, and then later confided that they had previously "learned it from a friend," but did not feel they had the same depth of experience as the friend until learning "properly" from a qualified, trained teacher.



Actually, this is not surprising. The ability to do something does not necessarily include the ability to pass it on effectively. It is best to learn from someone skilled in the art of teaching. An often unrecognized aspect of Maharishi's genius, and one of the principal reasons TM has been so effective for so many people, is the rigorous and thorough training he insisted prospective teachers receive before they are certified to teach.

### *LEARNING THE TECHNIQUE*

The standard seven-step course of instruction in TM begins with two lectures. The first outlines the benefits of TM practice, making frequent reference to scientific research that documents those benefits. A second lecture (sometimes combined with the first into a longer presentation) explains the fundamental principles of the practice itself, the tradition it comes from, and how it differs from other techniques.

Step three is a private interview with the TM instructor. This brief meeting offers a chance for the student to bring up any doubts, questions, or concerns that he or she may not have wanted to raise in a group setting. And it gives both teacher and student a few minutes to get acquainted with one another before instruction in the technique takes place.

Step four, the imparting of the practice, begins with the teacher performing a brief traditional ceremony of gratitude to the masters who have passed on the knowledge and made it available to the current generation. For TM teachers, the ceremony is an important reminder that the practice is not our own invention, but was given to us in trust, in a pure and effective form, and our obligation is to pass it on unaltered.

The five-minute ceremony uses incense, a candle, fruit, flowers, and a few other symbolic items; the person about to learn is simply a witness. Then the technique is taught, in a step-by-step process. An instruction is given, and based on the person's experience, further instruction, and so on. Over the course of the session, which generally lasts about an hour, new meditators have their first experience of transcending.

The celebrated film director David Lynch, a 35-year TM meditator at the time of this writing, described his first meditation experience this way:

You're given a mantra, a very specific sound vibration to think. You're taught how to use it. And then, you have your first meditation. I was taken to a little quiet room, told to sit down comfortably, close the eyes, and start to think that mantra. And it was as if I was in an elevator, and they cut the cable! In, out, down, I went! Sublime waves of bliss. Waves of happiness. *Felicidad*. Big, big, big. So sublime, so powerful, and I thought, *This is so magical, so beautiful. Where has this experience been?*

Not everyone's experience will be quite so dramatic, but it will almost invariably be deeply relaxing and peaceful. The majority of those I've taught say something like, "I've never felt so relaxed in my life." Many feel their own version of the expanded awareness and bubbling happiness that Lynch described. Just about everyone feels that they've begun something with great potential.

"I knew that I had just experienced something unusual while I had been sitting there on the chair with my eyes closed," Robert from Johannesburg said, "but I could not put my

finger on it. I just knew that in this first session of learning Transcendental Meditation, I had experienced a state of consciousness that felt pleasant, relaxing and uplifting. I felt good. I felt happy.”

Here’s another person’s first-day experience: “Following the instructions of the teacher, without knowing what to expect, I began to drift down into deeper and deeper levels of relaxation, as if I were sinking into my chair. Then for some time, perhaps a minute or a few minutes, I experienced a silent, inner state of no thoughts, just pure awareness and nothing else; then again I became aware of my surroundings. It left me with a deep sense of ease, inner renewal, and happiness.”

Over the following three days, new meditators meet with the teacher for follow-up sessions of about an hour and a half each. On the first day, the students report their experiences when meditating at home, ask questions, and are given further instructions that fine-tune the practice to ensure its effectiveness. Practical matters are sorted out: *What’s the best posture for meditation? Should I do it before or after meals? What does it mean if my mind gets very quiet and I have no thoughts? What if I have lots of thoughts?*

On the second day, once again based on the students’ own experiences and their questions, some further refinements are offered, everyone meditates together, and the teacher provides a detailed explanation of the mechanics of the practice: what happens, how it happens, and why it happens. On the final day of the course, the teacher lays out a vision of the ultimate goals of meditation, and a glimpse of the kind of growth that is likely to occur over months and years of regular practice.

Advanced techniques are very briefly explained, and an invitation is extended to participate in the many free activities offered, such as group meditations and advanced lectures.

The four-day course provides new meditators with sufficient knowledge and experience to continue meditating on their own, but they are advised and encouraged to have their meditation periodically “checked” by a qualified meditation guide to ensure that their progress is as rapid as possible and that maximum benefits are being derived. Checking of meditation, which can involve bringing in questions about experiences or doubts about correctness of practice, is mainly about readjusting the technique (if needed), in much the same way that airline pilots make tiny recalibrations to keep on course. Once a person has taken the course, checking is available free of charge at any of the hundreds of TM centers around the world.

Knowing the preciousness of this practice and all the blessings that it can bring into a person’s life, I want to emphasize once again the importance of learning it under the personal guidance of a trained teacher. There are countless techniques called “meditation” available today, in yoga studios, at the Y, even in doctors’ and chiropractors’ offices. No doubt all of these have some effect, often a good one. But to the best of my knowledge, none of the other meditation techniques are taught in such a careful, attentive, and systematic way, one-on-one, by teachers who have gone through full-time, in-residence training for several months. Learning TM is not a hit-or-miss kind of thing. If you take the course and practice as instructed, I am certain you will not be disappointed.

## THE FORGETFUL MILLIONAIRE

Maharishi spoke of his work as a revival of the knowledge of life. What he meant, I believe, is that people have forgotten about the underlying, unbounded, true nature of who we are. Caught up in daily pressures and difficulties, we have lost the dignity and stature that is rightfully ours. Our image of what we can be, what we can know and accomplish, and thus the goals we set for ourselves, are severely limited by our restricted knowledge of who we are. To discover that within every one of us is a limitless store of intelligence, energy, creativity, peace, and happiness is invaluable and liberating knowledge.

Maharishi did not use words like *infinite*, *eternal*, and *unbounded* in a loose, poetic, or metaphorical way. He was speaking a deep and quite literal truth. The experience of TM practitioners, many of whom have now been meditating for 35, 40 or more years, is that Maharishi was not exaggerating.

Because the TM technique is an open gateway to expansion of consciousness and attunement with the laws governing the natural world, it is the most important, central aspect of Maharishi's teaching. You will see, as we journey through the upcoming pages, that his contributions did not stop with TM; what he offered was on a grand scale, influencing virtually every aspect of human life. But TM is the key that unlocks and liberates our full potential for creative, joyful living.

“By not using his full potential,” Maharishi wrote, “man is unable to fulfill the purpose of his life. He suffers in many ways because he is not using the full conscious capacity of his mind or the great energy he carries within himself. He is not

experiencing and expressing in his life the abundance of absolute bliss that he naturally possesses, the absolute field of creativity and power that lies within. He is like a millionaire who has forgotten his wealth and position and goes begging in the street.”

All suffering and unhappiness “is due to ignorance of a way to unfold the divine glory which is present within oneself.”<sup>28</sup> This “way,” the technique of Transcendental Meditation, if adopted by humanity on a wide scale, could, Maharishi believed, render suffering obsolete in this generation.





## CHAPTER FIVE

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### THE NEUROPHYSIOLOGY OF ENLIGHTENMENT

#### *STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS*

“For thousands of years, men have speculated about the nature of human consciousness. Only within the last 50 years, however, have scientists gained the technical ability to describe the physiological and biochemical correlates of states of consciousness. This ability has enabled them better to understand the processes and the neural structures which underlie these states.”<sup>1</sup>

So begins Robert Keith Wallace’s *The Physiological Effects of Transcendental Meditation*, a landmark in scientific inquiry and in humanity’s knowledge of ourselves and the higher possibilities of human experience. Dr. Wallace was the first scientist in the world to undertake an extensive examination of the state of consciousness experienced during meditation. His findings, published in such authoritative journals as *Science*, *Scientific American*, *American Journal of Physiology*, and elsewhere, are pioneering discoveries with enormous potential applications to human life and health.

Wallace’s work was based upon previous research in the neurophysiology of consciousness. As a result of studies conducted in the second half of the 20th century, we know that for every state of mind, there is a corresponding physical



state of the human nervous system. Body and mind are so inextricably intertwined that when the mind is in a particular state of consciousness, the body and nervous system are set to a style of functioning that matches that state of awareness; when one changes, the other changes in tandem.

Wilder Penfield, a neurophysiologist at the Montreal Neurological Institute, stated this principle succinctly: “We are differently conscious from moment to moment, and concomitant with that there is a differing pattern of neuron activation.”<sup>2</sup>

When we are awake, our metabolic rate, heart rate, blood chemistry, and so on, are within a certain well-known range, and depending on what we are doing (reading, running, ruminating, remembering ...) the electrical activity of our brains takes on specific patterns. When we fall asleep, metabolic rate drops, heart rate decreases, and brain waves change. During dreaming, another unique set of physiological correlates arises. Each shift in the state of consciousness is accompanied by a shift of biochemical functions of the body. If you hook up people to monitor changes in their EEG, EKG (electrocardiograph), metabolic rate and so on, researchers can easily tell, even if they can't see the individuals, whether they're sleeping, dreaming, or awake.

Until the 1950s, physiologists recognized only two states of consciousness: wakefulness and sleep. Dreaming was considered merely a variation or subset of the sleep state. Extensive investigation of the dream state, however, revealed the magnitude of changes that took place: different brain-wave patterns, rapid eye movements, changes in muscle

tension, increased metabolic rate, and so on. Dreaming came to be accepted as a third major state of consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

In light of these findings on consciousness and its physiological correlates, it is clear that if the experience of pure awareness during Transcendental Meditation is real and not illusory, if it is a state of consciousness significantly different from the ordinary experiences of life, its reality and uniqueness should be scientifically verifiable. Maharishi talked about this from the earliest days of his teachings, and wherever he went in the world, he urged scientists to study TM and make their findings known. Is TM a matter of faith or belief? Is it a mood or a form of positive thinking, an “altered state”? Or is it an actual state of consciousness, a state of awareness coupled with a specific physiological signature, with measurable effects and significant implications?

*HALF A CENTURY OF RESEARCH:  
TM, O<sub>2</sub>, EEG, GSR, AND THE M.D.'S*

At UCLA in the mid-1960s, a young graduate student took up Maharishi’s challenge. New to meditation but impressed by his own experiences and by the explanations Maharishi had provided about the metabolic and other physiological changes that take place during TM, Robert Keith Wallace persuaded his advisors to allot him lab space for research that had never been conducted in the history of science.

A few years later, writing in the March 27, 1970, issue of *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Wallace reported on the experiment he had conducted, in which oxygen consumption, skin

resistance (how easily an electrical current passes over the skin), and electroencephalograph measurements

were recorded before, during, and after subjects practiced a technique called transcendental meditation. There were significant changes between the control period and the meditation period in all measurements. During meditation, oxygen consumption and heart rate decreased, skin resistance increased, and the electroencephalogram showed specific changes in certain frequencies.<sup>4</sup>

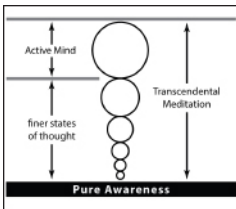
In his conclusion, Wallace remarked that physiologically, the state produced by Transcendental Meditation “seems to be distinct from commonly encountered states of consciousness, such as wakefulness, sleep, and dreaming, and from altered states of consciousness, such as hypnosis and autosuggestion.”<sup>5</sup> In his Ph.D. thesis and in later articles and books, Wallace referred to the state experienced during TM as a “fourth major state of consciousness.”

This is a provocative, even revolutionary, proposal. It suggests that the human nervous system is capable of setting itself to function in *an entirely new state of consciousness*, as different from ordinary daily experience as being awake is from deep sleep.

Before we look at Wallace’s findings, I’d like to make a short detour back in time to Maharishi’s first book, *Science of Being and Art of Living*, published in 1962, in which he explained exactly what happens during Transcendental Meditation.

“As the mind begins to experience subtler states of thought,” he wrote, “it engages itself in correspondingly less activity, and as a result breathing simultaneously begins to be shallower, more refined and reduced in amplitude.”<sup>6</sup>

The familiar diagram below illustrates this gradual refinement of mental activity during TM, which takes place as the attention shifts from the *surface* level of thought through increasingly settled, quiet levels to the *source* of thought.



“Greater activity needs greater energy,” Maharishi continued, “which is produced by the increased oxidation of carbon ... and less activity needs a smaller amount of energy. This shows that when during TM less carbon dioxide is eliminated by softer breathing, the process of oxidation must be less.”<sup>7</sup>

Thus, as Wallace’s physiological experiments would soon reveal: “The activity of the body and the nervous system is reduced during Transcendental Meditation. The whole body becomes calm and quiet as the mind proceeds to experience finer states of a thought. This quietening of the body naturally allows an unusual degree of rest.”<sup>8</sup>

With that explanation under our belts, let’s return to the experimental subjects sitting in their lab chairs meditating, and see what Wallace found out about them. There were five

major results, four indicating deep rest very similar to sleep, the fifth indicating wakefulness:

1. Lower metabolism, indicated by a significant decrease in oxygen consumption and carbon dioxide elimination
2. A slowing down of heart rate and breathing
3. Deep relaxation, indicated by a steep increase in skin resistance
4. Decrease in blood lactate, indicating reduction of anxiety and stress
5. Increased alpha and theta brain-wave activity, spreading from the rear to the central and frontal areas of the brain

What does all this mean? Let's look at the findings one at a time. I'll explain Dr. Wallace's initial findings, and then review subsequent research in each area. It is worth mentioning that Wallace's early work—published when he was only 25 years old—was not only pioneering and innovative, it was also amazingly complete. Over the next 40 years, additional studies—by Wallace himself as well as hundreds of other researchers around the world—have built on his very solid foundation to expand, corroborate, and fine-tune his discoveries.

**Decreased Metabolic Rate.** Metabolic rate, or the rate at which the body consumes energy, is generally considered the best way to measure the level of activity or rest in a system. And since all activity and metabolism depend on oxygen, the standard way to gauge metabolic rate is to monitor oxygen

consumption. Wallace found that “oxygen consumption decreased in all subjects within 5 minutes after the onset of meditation. The mean decrease was about 45 cm<sup>3</sup>/min, or about a 20 percent decrease from the control period.”<sup>9</sup> In a later study in the *American Journal of Physiology*, Wallace and colleagues reported that “after 6–7 hours of sleep ... O<sub>2</sub> consumption usually decreases about 15%.”<sup>10</sup> This means that the metabolic rate of the meditating subjects appeared to be more sharply reduced during TM than occurs during sleep, and this happened within five to ten minutes, rather than after six or seven hours.

**Slowing of Breathing and Heart Rates.** Wallace found that during TM, the heart rate of each of the subjects decreased an average of five beats per minute. And consistent with lower metabolic rates, breathing slowed down and also “softened,” so that the amount of oxygen taken in decreased considerably. [Figure 5-1] Both of these measures indicate rest and are the opposite of the stress response, which produces hyper-arousal of the system, quickened breathing, and faster heart rate.

Research in later years would find that the slower pulse rate becomes stabilized in TM meditators, decreasing the workload of the heart. Maharishi commented on this years before the research appeared, stating that unless a person gives the heart a chance to slow down and gain a deep rest for a few minutes daily, “one has no chance of providing any rest for the inner machinery of the body, which otherwise functions 24 hours a day for the whole of one’s life as long as breath flows. It is obviously to the advantage of health and longevity that the ever-functioning inner machinery of the body be allowed a few minutes of rest and silence each day through this regular practice.”<sup>11</sup>

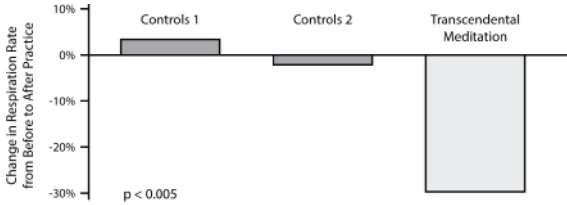


Figure 5-1

In this French study, TM meditators showed a natural decline in respiration rate during the practice, indicating a state of deep rest, in contrast to two groups of controls.<sup>12</sup>

**Increased Skin Resistance.** Galvanic skin response (GSR) is commonly used in the “lie detector” test. It measures how easily an electrical current passes across the skin, from point to point on the palm of the hand. When a person is relaxed, the skin is dry and the current passes relatively slowly; resistance to its flow is high. When tension or anxiety increases, sweating occurs; because of the moisture, the resistance drops and the current moves more easily. Thus, high GSR indicates a high level of relaxation. Wallace’s research showed that skin resistance increased markedly during TM. The GSR showed an average increase of about 250 percent, going as high as 500 percent, as opposed to a typical 100 percent to 200 percent increase during sleep.<sup>13</sup> This is a third indicator of deep rest and relaxation during the practice.

Further GSR studies were undertaken at The University of Texas, El Paso, shortly after Wallace’s research, by another young scientist, psychologist David Orme-Johnson, who would go on to become one of the world’s leading researchers

on meditation, the development of consciousness, and the effects of meditating groups on the health of society.

When a person is subjected to a sudden unexpected stressor, such as a loud noise, GSR amplitude typically shows a sharp decrease for a few seconds and then returns to normal. If the stress is repeated often enough, eventually one gets accustomed to it and stops reacting. Generally the calmer people are, the more quickly they habituate to a repeated stressor they know to be harmless. Orme-Johnson subjected a group of meditators and nonmeditators to repeated loud noises. The meditators habituated after far fewer repetitions—11—than did the nonmeditators—26—suggesting that meditators are more stable, less anxious and jittery than nonmeditators.<sup>14</sup>

*“I was teaching experimental psychology at the University of Texas. I started doing a classroom demonstration of reactions to stress. There were some students in my classes who were practicing TM. I noticed that they recovered faster from a stressful event, and found that they were more physiologically stable. If you’re not stressed out and worrying about things, if you’re just quiet in yourself, then when something stressful does happen, you respond but you don’t keep grinding on it, you can relax and come back to your balance point again, and that’s what I saw happening with those meditating students.”*

— **DAVID ORME-JOHNSON, PH.D.** IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL RESEARCHERS IN THE WORLD ON MEDITATION AND ITS EFFECTS, WITH OVER 100 PUBLICATIONS, MOSTLY IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS. HE HAS TRAVELED TO NEARLY 60 COUNTRIES TO SPEAK ABOUT THE RESEARCH ON



MEDITATION TO SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, PARLIAMENTS, HEADS OF STATE, AND THE UNITED NATIONS.<sup>15</sup>

Three years after this study, Daniel Goleman and Gary Schwartz replicated the research at Harvard and found the same results: individuals practicing Transcendental Meditation reacted a bit more sensitively to the stressor, but then recovered and returned to a state of equilibrium much more quickly.<sup>16</sup>

**Lower Lactate Levels.** A few years before any studies on TM were published, a *Scientific American* article, “The Biochemistry of Anxiety,” had linked lactate in the blood with anxiety and stress.<sup>17</sup> In Keith Wallace’s original research, the blood-lactate concentration during TM was found to decrease an average of 33 percent, and remain low for a considerable length of time thereafter. In his 1972 *Scientific American* article, “The Physiology of Meditation,” co-authored with Dr. Herbert Benson, Wallace noted that cardiac patients with high blood pressure tend to have higher concentrations of lactate in their blood, “whereas in contrast, the low lactate level in transcendental meditators ... may be responsible in part for the meditators’ thoroughly relaxed state.”<sup>18</sup>

Over the next few decades, study after study came out showing that the TM technique routinely produces a deep state of rest and relaxation. In 1987, David Orme-Johnson and Michael Dillbeck published a meta-analysis in *American Psychologist*, statistically analyzing 31 research papers on TM and “eyes-closed rest” to compare the depth of rest gained. (A meta-analysis is a study of studies, an analysis of a

number of relevant research projects that can yield much more definitive conclusions than a single study.) A potent scientific response to skeptics who claimed that TM was just the same as resting, this meta-analysis showed clearly that, compared to simply sitting with the eyes closed, people practicing TM enjoyed significantly greater rest and relaxation—well over twice as much—on the three measures we just looked at: (1) increased skin resistance, (2) decreased respiration rate, and (3) a decrease in the stress-related hormone, plasma lactate. Heart rate also decreased significantly.<sup>19</sup>

**Faster Reaction Time.** Another type of study also pointed out the difference between TM and simply resting. Two researchers at The University of Texas, Austin, gave a standard reaction-time test to a sampling of meditators and nonmeditators. Reaction time, by measuring the speed of response to a given stimulus, gauges the alertness of mind and the coordination of mind and body. The researchers found that the TM meditators had a consistently faster reaction time—by a rather dramatic 30 percent—than the nonmeditators. The meditators were then asked to meditate for 20 minutes while the nonmeditators were simply to close their eyes and rest. The tests were administered again. The nonmeditators reacted more slowly than before their rest period, by about 10 percent, while the meditators' speed *improved* by about 15 percent. This indicates that merely closing the eyes and resting can be dulling to the mind, whereas the dynamic process of TM is enlivening and refreshing, producing greater awareness and alertness.<sup>20</sup>

**EEG Changes—First Findings.** Another unique discovery concerns brain-wave patterns. If you're unfamiliar with this

terminology, “brain wave” refers to a measurement made by a delicate instrument known as an electroencephalograph, or EEG. This machine utilizes tiny electrodes, sensitive electronic devices like little microphones, which are placed on various points along the outer surface of the skull. [Figure 5-2] The electrodes pick up the faint impulses of electrical activity within the brain, which are amplified and converted into visuals on a computer screen. What appears on the screen are long trains of wavelike patterns.



Figure 5-2

Practicing Transcendental Meditation while sensors (in the stretch cap) pick up the faint electrical activity of the brain. Note the computer screen, which shows coherence (similarity) of brain waves from various parts of the brain.

The different patterns have been given names. There are *alpha*, *beta*, *gamma*, *delta*, *theta*, and so on. Over the years, researchers have been able to ascertain that certain waves are indicative of specific brain events and activities. Delta waves,

for example, seem to be reliable indicators of sleep. Beta waves represent focused wakeful activity. Alpha waves, which are found greatly increased in TM practitioners, have been associated with relaxation and a general freedom from anxiety. But the knowledge of what each type of wave truly means is still relatively young and somewhat inconclusive. What is more interesting is to observe the various patterns of waves coming from different parts of the brain.

For example, motor controls, which regulate our voluntary movements, are located in the anterior (the front part) of the brain, as are the higher “executive” functions such as the ability to organize, plan, initiate projects, and see them through to completion. The sensory processors, dealing with input from the five senses, are mostly in the back (posterior) portions of the brain. Of the brain’s two cerebral hemispheres, the right one is considered to be responsible for the more intuitive, “artistic” side of a person’s nature, described by researchers as melodic and spatial composition, nonverbal idea formation, and synthesis rather than analysis. The left hemisphere is the seat of analytic, verbal, logical thinking.

In the majority of people, these two hemispheres are ordinarily out of equilibrium, with either the right or left side dominating. Also, for most, the brain waves from different areas of the brain are quite random, somewhat incoherent and disorderly. Some researchers, noting that the brain patterns of psychotic patients are exceptionally random and chaotic, have suggested that orderliness of the brain waves is an indication of psychological health. Thus, in addition to the common-sense understanding that a disorderly brain would lead to disorderly and, hence, ineffective, inefficient thinking and behavior, ample scientific evidence suggests the

desirability of orderly brain functioning for integration and balance of personality. As John Hagelin expressed it, “Everything good about the brain depends on its orderly functioning.” [Figure 5-3]

## OPTIMIZATION OF BRAIN FUNCTIONING

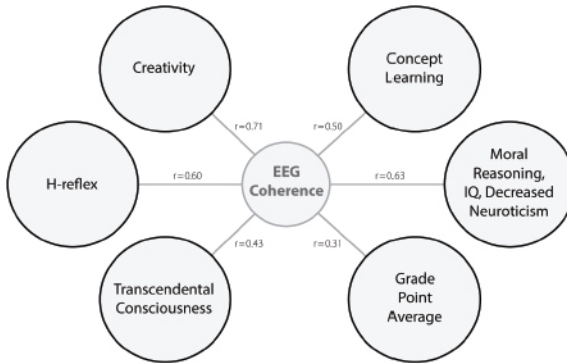


Figure 5-3

High levels of EEG coherence measured during TM are correlated with higher creativity, greater efficiency in learning new concepts, more principled moral reasoning, higher verbal intelligence [quotient] (IQ), decreased anxiety, higher academic achievement, and clearer experiences of transcendental consciousness.<sup>21</sup>

Now let's take a look at the main types of brain-wave orderliness found during TM practice.

### *COHERENT BRAINS*

When researchers began monitoring the brain-wave patterns of meditators, they didn't know what they'd find. They hooked people up to their EEG machines and eagerly watched the readouts (which in the early days were printouts on paper), and then sat down to interpret the results. The most striking findings were that at various times during the meditation sessions, virtually identical patterns would appear at many, or even all, of the points being monitored. The researchers began to speak of this phenomenon—the simultaneous occurrence of the same types of brain waves in different regions of the brain—as *coherence* or *synchrony*, and they conjectured that they represented moments of transcendence, or pure consciousness.

One type of synchrony that became apparent was that as the meditator relaxed into the meditation session, brain waves in the two cerebral hemispheres—ordinarily quite out of sync, and firing away in their own little analytic or intuitive universes—began to fall into step with one another, reaching a peak of coherence at just those moments the researchers had thought might correspond to the experience of transcendence.

The synchrony was of three kinds. First, the *frequency* of the waves—the speed of the waves measured in number of cycles per second—became purified; that is, it became equal or very nearly equal in both hemispheres, whereas before it had been quite dissimilar. The *phase* of the waves also became synchronous. Instead of the crest of wave A occurring at the time wave B was at its trough, the waves began to travel together in time. Finally, the *amplitude* became equalized, indicating that the power output became balanced. Instead of the energy from the right or left side being greater, the output became nearly equal during the TM session.

Further research has shown that this more balanced, integrated relationship between the brain's two hemispheres persists after TM practice. This increased coordination of the activity of the two sides of the brain, with their known separate functions, may account for the greater creativity observed in meditators in a number of psychological tests. Some psychologists have associated the creative process with a more integrated, balanced activation of the two hemispheres, which puts into play their opposite but complementary functions.

Another type of orderliness occurring during TM practice integrates the front and back areas of the brain. Brain waves ordinarily characteristic of the posterior cortex (alpha waves) spread forward in a synchronous, coherent pattern over the entire brain to the frontal region. Because the sensory centers of the brain are mostly in the back, and the motor controls are in the frontal regions, we could expect this type of EEG ordering to result in heightened mind-body coordination and a greater integration of thought and action. And indeed, a number of tests do show improved coordination of mind and body, superior athletic performance and, as we saw a few pages back, faster reaction time in meditators, both immediately following a TM session and in subsequent activity.

*FURTHER RESEARCH: IN SEARCH  
OF THE FOURTH STATE—AND BEYOND*

Keith Wallace's early research was challenged by scientists who maintained that simply resting could lower metabolism and increase alpha brain rhythms, so TM is not as unique as claimed. Looking honestly at these critiques, Wallace and

other TM researchers realized an incompleteness in their work.

Probably the main difficulty in assessing what happens during a meditation session is that TM does not produce a uniform, static state, in which the mind settles down and stays settled for the 20- or 30-minute session. Rather, it is a dynamic, fluid process, involving an inward phase, during which the mind does quiet down toward a state of least excitation; a period of transcendence or pure consciousness; and an outward phase during which awareness moves back toward more excited, surface levels and the mind engages in thinking about one thing or another before beginning another inward dive.

This inward and outward movement of awareness occurs several times during each meditation. Thus, as Wallace explained in his book *The Neurophysiology of Enlightenment*, each session is likely to include a “mixture of active waking state, drowsiness, sleep or relaxation, quiet waking state, and transcending.”<sup>22</sup>

By factoring in all the measurements (of EEG, GSR, breath rate, and so on) taken during an entire meditation session—or over many sessions—the researcher would end up with a composite that averaged out all the phases, from active thoughts to deep silence, rather than a clear depiction of what transpires during the actual experience of transcendence, the fourth state of consciousness. *Transcending*, the settling or “de-exciting” of the mind, is not quite *transcendence*, the settled state of inner silence. In order to isolate the fourth state and distinguish it from other events that occur during TM practice, further research would be needed.



Many people who learn TM have to unlearn a very common misconception—that you need to “quiet your mind,” that a “good” meditation is one in which there are no thoughts. In TM, there are certainly moments of silence when thoughts dissolve into pure awareness, and those moments increase in frequency and expand in duration as time goes by. But most people also experience all kinds of thoughts, including memories, plans, daydreams, composing shopping lists, or composing symphonies. All of these and more, including falling asleep, are considered aspects of successful practice, and will bring positive results if they arise spontaneously out of meditating in the prescribed manner.

Sarah Wilson, the Australian journalist who recounted her experience of getting a career-changing job shortly after learning TM, reported that she had a lot of mental activity during her practice, yet felt she was deriving great benefit. “The important thing is that when I come out of it after 20 minutes, I’m 2938473 times calmer. This is what counts. Not what you do in meditation, but what happens after. Everything feels sweeter.”

Another consideration regarding the early research is that when it was being conducted, there were very few meditators. This radically limited the sample size from which to draw experimental subjects. In early 1966, at about the time Wallace was initiating his research, there were only a few hundred TM meditators in the entire United States! At the end of 1968, that number had jumped to 5,000—a lot more, but still not a huge amount, and obviously almost all of those people were relatively new meditators with limited meditation mileage, whose experiences had not had much time to deepen and mature. A decade later, when the sample pool was

approaching a million in the U.S. alone, and many people were reporting clear and sustained experiences of pure consciousness, the research would yield much more reliable results.

To more accurately determine the correlates of the fourth state, several factors seemed promising for investigation. Let's look at two:

1. Breath suspension, those moments reported by meditators when their relaxation was most profound and their breathing became so settled and refined that it seemed to stop entirely
2. High global EEG coherence, when the electrical activity from all parts of the brain fell into synch

The fascinating thing is that these two phenomena tended to occur together.

In the early and mid-80s, Russell Hebert and John Farrow set up several experiments in which they monitored the respiratory patterns of meditators to determine if there were indeed periods in which their breathing would become extremely rarefied or briefly suspended. They asked the subjects to meditate normally, and to press a button each time they felt they had just transcended. All through the experiment, they were also monitoring the subjects' brain waves with an EEG. When they analyzed their data, they found a very close correlation between (1) the button presses (which reflected subjective experiences of transcendence or pure consciousness), (2) breath suspensions of up to a minute in duration, and (3) EEG coherence that was global

(throughout the brain) but which particularly showed up as alpha coherence in the front of the brain.

When the control subjects were asked to intentionally hold their breath, EEG coherence did not occur, and after they stopped holding their breath, they immediately resorted to what researchers called “compensatory overbreathing”—holding their breath had resulted in insufficient oxygen intake, and they had to breathe more deeply to make up for it. The TM meditators showed no compensatory overbreathing after their periods of breath suspension, indicating that it was a natural phenomenon resulting from deep rest.<sup>23</sup>

Once they began pinpointing the distinction between what occurs during the entirety of a TM session and what happens during actual transcendence, the researchers had new questions: *Does transcendence occur right away when you learn the practice? Does the brain-wave coherence, the increased brain integration that occurs during meditation, persist outside of meditation, or happen only when you meditate? Does it become more pronounced or stabilized over time?*

The most prolific and accomplished researcher on TM and the brain is Dr. Fred Travis, director of the Center for Brain, Consciousness, and Cognition at Maharishi University of Management. Travis has observed and analyzed the brain waves of more than 1,500 meditators over two decades. In an important paper published in the *International Journal of Neuroscience* in 2006, Travis reported that new meditators appear to master the art of transcending right away: within a couple of months of learning the technique, their patterns of

brain-wave coherence during meditation are virtually indistinguishable from the meditating brains of longtime, experienced meditators.

But *outside* their meditation sessions, in ordinary activity, it's a different story altogether. The longer people meditate, the frontal coherence that was initially seen only or primarily during TM begins to show up to an increasing extent in daily life. The state of restful alertness becomes the foundation for all experience throughout the day. According to Maharishi, this is the first sign of the development of higher states of consciousness: the fourth state (pure consciousness, transcendence) beginning to coexist with the other three states, wakefulness, sleep, and dreaming.<sup>24</sup>

A few years ago, Maharishi's claim that TM produced a unique, physiologically measurable fourth state of consciousness was met with skepticism in the scientific community. Today it is scientific fact. It is, however, still a *little-known* fact, just as the truths brought out by quantum mechanics, despite its being called "the most successful theory in the history of science," remain known to only a relatively small percentage of the population, while the rest still live in the Newtonian universe. It takes some time for new truths to percolate through the world and replace old ways of thinking.

Will further research bring to light the existence of a fifth, or even further states that become possible as people evolve, enlivening deeper areas of the mind and nervous system and bringing their full potential into play? Stay tuned as this exciting inner frontier of knowledge opens new horizons of understanding and opportunities for growth.



## CHAPTER SIX

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### TM: RX FOR GOOD HEALTH

To ascribe the vast array of demonstrated health benefits of TM primarily to the deep rest and relief from stress this simple meditation technique bestows on its practitioners would be sensible and valid. We all understand how healing it is to rest deeply and peacefully, and we saw in the previous chapter how very deep the rest that occurs during TM actually is. But in fact, the relaxation, stress reduction, brain-wave coherence, and dozens of specific health benefits I will describe in this chapter are side effects of a much deeper cause: our ability to draw upon the governing intelligence of nature to enliven the body's inherent self-repair and balancing mechanisms, and restore order and wholeness within and around us.

Maharishi was adamant that the remarkable organizing power of nature that he called “the total potential of Natural Law” is available to *everyone, as it is* the intrinsic inner intelligence of our own bodies. The strategies he formulated, in collaboration with health experts from East and West, aimed to promote good health, prevent illness, and effect healing when needed by setting up conditions in body and brain to enliven pure consciousness and allow it to resonate in every cell.

The brain is the central intelligence of the body, the CEO. If the brain is disorderly, the body will reflect that disorder. Our language itself speaks of physical problems as *disorders*, such

as a “kidney disorder.” We speak of something being “out of order” when it is not operating as it should, and we say “everything is in order” to indicate proper, harmonious functioning. Because pure consciousness is a field of perfect orderliness, and even a little contact with this field begins to cultivate a more orderly functioning of mind and body, we can see why Maharishi considered the experience of transcendence, opening one’s awareness to the central fact of all existence and being, to be the key to perfect health.

*A COSMIC PERSPECTIVE  
ON INTELLIGENCE, MIND, AND BODY*

In *Science of Being and Art of Living*, Maharishi opens his chapter on health by stating something we all instinctively know: “The problem of health is the most vital problem in life. Everything depends upon health.” Inner peace and happiness, our attitude and behavior toward others, our accomplishments, and “above all, life itself depends on health.” But then he goes on to say, “To consider health fully, we should take into account both the health of the individual and that of the cosmos—man and his atmosphere.”<sup>1</sup>

The *cosmos*? In a consideration of health?

That’s the first clue that Maharishi’s vision of how to create, maintain, and restore good health goes far beyond ordinary conceptions of “mind-body medicine” or “holistic health.” More than familiar strategies like visualizing white blood cells gobbling up cancer cells, seeing yourself surrounded by golden light, having a positive attitude, or having faith in your ultimate healing—all of which have been found helpful—it’s about expanding your consciousness to get acquainted with

the field of all possibilities, the inner intelligence not only of the body, but of the universe itself, and by strengthening your connection to that field, positively affecting all levels of the physiology.

That field of pure Being, the Unified Field that is the fountainhead of all the laws of nature that govern the existence and evolution of everything in the cosmos, is a field of perfect order. As mentioned above, illness is essentially a form of *disorder*, a condition in which some aspect(s) of our body and mind do not function properly. Maintaining health is maintaining order, or correct, balanced functioning according to nature's design, and getting well means restoring that order if it gets disrupted. This is the goal of every system of medicine.

In order to be successful in achieving this goal, healing has to occur not merely on the level of overt symptoms of disease and dysfunction; the appearance of illness is in actuality a very late manifestation of a process that begins with an imbalance on a subtle level and only much later surfaces as visible symptoms. To repair the original imbalance requires operating on those subtler levels. Thus, all the modalities of Maharishi's approach to health act to restore balance by enlivening the connection between all levels of the physiology—molecules, cells, organs, organ systems—and their source in pure consciousness.

As he said, "It is lamentable that for centuries past the problem of ill health has been considered primarily on the physical level. Thanks to recent advances in medicine"—advances that had not fully come to light yet in 1962 when he wrote those words—"investigations into the



causes of disease have revealed that for a great majority of ailments the disease may be of a physical nature though its cause is not physical.”<sup>2</sup>

To truly heal, and to create a situation such that people do not become sick, strong coordination has to be established, a frictionless flow from the unmanifest field of pure intelligence deep within, through the mind and nervous system, to all parts of the body. It’s like the analogy of the tree I cited earlier in this book: for the tree to thrive in all its aspects, it must maintain contact with the nourishment in the soil, and that nourishment must be able to flow unhindered to every part of the tree. When the ordering intelligence that characterizes the quantum level of nature, the domain that Maharishi called the Constitution of the Universe because of its organizing power, begins to flow freely through all the levels of our being, we naturally and spontaneously move in the direction of perfect health.

Our life is a continuum, ranging from the silence of pure existence and pure intelligence at the source of thought, through the subtle levels of thought and the delicate fabric of the nervous system, to the cells, organs, and muscles of the body, and extending out into the environment through the air we breathe, the information we glean through the senses, and the influences we take in from others and produce through our words and actions. There is a constant exchange between us and our world. Most of us tend to feel separate, but in fact we are intimately connected; we influence and are influenced by the elements as well as by the thoughts, feelings, words, actions, and attitudes of others in the near and far environment. We are, in a very real sense, cells in the body of a living world, in which every cell affects every other.

In order to express maximum health, intelligence, and power for ourselves and the well-being of the whole, we need to be connected to the source of all intelligence and power in the Unified Field. Our minds forge that link. In reality, the connection is always there; we couldn't function or even exist without it! But it can be strengthened. Our minds serve as the interface “to connect Being of unmanifested nature to the body and to the manifested aspects of the relative world,” a link that enables us to more and more fully integrate the absolute and relative in the wholeness of our own life.<sup>3</sup>

Mind, Maharishi said, “could be defined as vibrating consciousness.”<sup>4</sup> In fact, “all the different strata of creation are nothing but different stages of vibrating consciousness.”<sup>5</sup> Take a moment and see if you can envision your entire body being built up—like the cosmos—of layers of vibrating consciousness, more than just interconnected, but actually an unbroken wholeness—a continuum reaching from the subtlest to the most solid surface values. Or perhaps it would be easier to see it in the opposite way: starting on the surface and then fine-tuning the microscope of your mind to take in ever-more-refined levels until reaching the unmoving silence deep within. Here is the key to perfect health and balance: enlivening all these various levels and layers of your individual being by directly accessing the ultimate ground state of universal being, universal intelligence. This is Maharishi's Vedic Approach to Health.

For generations, science insisted on the absolute separation of mind and body. The body alone, concrete and physical, was held to be real. Mind, abstract and nonmaterial, was considered a mere “epiphenomenon”; mental events were believed to be simply a result of bioelectrical activity in the

brain. Even those who believed in the reality of mind could not explain how the mind and body interacted, but in relatively recent years, we've found out.

Due to the insights and persistent investigations of Candace Pert, Ph.D., and other path-breaking scientists, we now know that our thoughts and feelings are converted instantaneously into molecules, the abstraction of thought becoming the concreteness of chemistry. Traveling through the body, they influence the function and structure of every aspect of our physiology, instructing each one of our cells when to divide, for example, and what proteins to produce in what quantity. Every flicker of thought and emotion changes who we are. In Deepak Chopra's memorable words, "To think is to practice brain chemistry."

Mental/emotional events trigger cascades of chemicals called *neuropeptides* and *neurotransmitters* (more than 200 have been identified so far) that flood through the system, conveying very specific messages: "Danger ahead! Produce more adrenaline! Pump more blood!" or "Okay, all clear; settle down." Angry, depressed, fearful thoughts and feelings produce extra wear on the organs of the body and on the immune system; kind, uplifting, positive thoughts and feelings are nourishing. At every moment, in every part of the body, these messages are flowing.

As scientists observed the immediacy of the communications, and realized that all the organs and systems of the body exchange information via the intricate neuropeptide highways (it isn't just the brain instructing the body how to behave, but an ongoing conversation), it became clear that every shift in our mental or emotional state produces a shift in physiology,

and every change in physiology causes a corresponding change in our mental/emotional state. The intimacy was such that a clear-cut distinction between mind and body became impossible to maintain, and some people began to speak of the “bodymind” to symbolize the dynamic, evolving wholeness of who we are.

This close relationship of mind and body is what carries the benefits of transcendence, of the brain-wave coherence, deep restfulness, and feelings of peace, expansiveness, and mental clarity gained in meditation into all our actions and interactions.

### *THE HEALING POWER OF REST*

When Keith Wallace was compiling the very first scientific evidence of the benefits of TM for his doctoral dissertation at UCLA, he reported on a questionnaire answered by 394 individuals practicing TM, of whom 117 noted fewer colds; 29, fewer headaches; 19, a decrease in allergic reactions; 7, an improvement in hypertension; and 84, an improvement or cure of miscellaneous problems such as overweight, acne, asthma, ulcers, insomnia, and even multiple sclerosis. Also, 333 of the 394 noticed an improvement in mental health, and 22 had been able to discontinue psychiatric treatment as a result of the beneficial effects of TM.<sup>6</sup> This was a self-report, which in scientific circles carries little weight; nevertheless, as you’ll see, just about all these health benefits—and more—have been demonstrated by “serious” research over the subsequent years.

The most significant measurable factor in producing such changes is the deep state of rest gained during TM. We know

from personal experience how valuable rest is, both as the basis of effective and enjoyable activity, and for our health. When we get sick, some of the most useful advice doctors offer is to “get some extra rest,” so that the body’s self-healing mechanisms can kick into high gear and restore homeostatic balance.

TM provides a respite from activity that at its deepest points (when the mind is most settled and breathing most shallow) is deeper than sleep. Apparently, the physiological and biochemical changes that occur during TM relieve the strains and stresses imposed upon the nervous system itself more efficiently than do either dreaming or sleeping. Thus, it may be that deprivation of *transcending* leaves the nervous system burdened with deep-rooted stresses that hinder us from activating the full range of our inherent capabilities, whether sensory, emotional, intellectual, physical, or spiritual.

Continuing regularly in the practice gradually frees the system from the stress of the past. Unrelieved and unresolved emotions, deeply entrenched exhaustion and strain, physiological remnants of forgotten troubles far below the conscious level—all of which inhibit the full use of our faculties and keep us a prey to our own weaknesses—are dissolved. We can then act more spontaneously (not fenced in by old, rigid habit boxes), and with more creativity and energy. And naturally, as stress goes, health arrives in fuller measure.

Just as we walk on two feet, each foot alternately active and inactive, so progress in life has two complementary but opposite phases: activity and rest. And action, Maharishi liked to say, “rests on rest.” The most profound rest gives rise to the

most dynamic activity. This is just as true of us as it is of cosmic life, in which the absolute nonmoving, nonchanging silence of the Unified Field gives rise to the unfathomably diverse and endlessly dynamic universe.

Throughout nature as we know it, the significance of rest is evident. Everything alive moves through cycles of rest and activity. Waves rise and fall, day and night follow in succession, spring's explosive energy follows the quiescence of winter, and even plants rest in the night and continue the photosynthesis process in the daylight.

Maharishi called the state produced in TM “restful alertness,” because even though the body is resting so deeply, the mind is fully awake, as the brain-wave patterns indicate. “In this quiet state, both the mind and the nervous system are alertly poised,” he wrote. “It is this restful alertness of the nervous system which represents its most healthy state and is the basis of all energy and action.”<sup>7</sup>

Wallace and Benson concluded their article in *Scientific American* by suggesting that the state produced by TM, “representing quiescence rather than hyper-activation of the sympathetic nervous system, may indicate a guidepost to better health. It should be well worthwhile to investigate the possibilities for clinical application of this state of wakeful rest and relaxation.”<sup>8</sup>

This calm but alert state is produced in an entirely natural way by allowing the attention to fall on increasingly more refined, quieter levels of mental activity. There's no conscious effort to relax, no manipulation of the body, and no attempt to control breathing. It's purely a result of the inward

journey of the mind toward pure consciousness—a journey, you might recall from an earlier chapter, that is motivated entirely by the mind’s quest for greater satisfaction.

### *DEFUSING STRESS*

Many years ago, a reporter for the *Albany Student Press*, reacting to a TM lecture on the State University of New York campus, wrote: “TM people think that the answer to *Future Shock* has arrived in their movement.”<sup>9</sup> It was a perceptive remark. In his best-selling book, futurist Alvin Toffler defined *future shock* as the “distress, both physical and psychological, that arises from overload of the human organism’s physical adaptive systems and its decision-making processes.”<sup>10</sup> This overload is what Maharishi referred to as “stress.”

Research has shown that a complex series of changes takes place in the body numerous times every day. Conflict, uncertainty, loss, frightening or shocking incidents, traffic jams, overdue bills, job insecurity, worries about the state of the world—all these and more trigger what is called the “adaptive reaction,” or “adaptation response,” the same response the body makes when our lives are in actual physical danger.

Robert Sapolsky, a professor of biological and neurological sciences at Stanford University, put it this way: “When you run for your life, basics are all that matter. Lungs work overtime to pump mammoth quantities of oxygen into the bloodstream. The heart races to pump that oxygen throughout the body.... You need your blood pressure up to deliver that energy. You need to turn off anything that’s not essential. Growth, reproduction—you know, you’re running for your

life, this is no time to ovulate—tissue repair, all that sort of thing, do it later if there is a later.”<sup>11</sup>

This brilliantly orchestrated response to threat or danger—real or imagined—is natural and useful for survival (“fight or flight”), but when it gets activated repeatedly, as it does in the modern world, it wreaks havoc on the body and threatens our health. Prolonged activation of the stress response, if it is not offset by the parasympathetic nervous system’s “relax and renew” or “rest and recuperate” response, strains all the body’s systems and will eventually lead to illness and dysfunction.

Stress can kill brain cells, unravel chromosomes, and add fat to our bellies. The accumulation of stress not only reduces our ability to function at our best, lowers our energy level, and limits our ability to enjoy life, but it is also the cause or at the very least a complicating factor in most of the illnesses and chronic conditions that plague us: anxiety, insomnia, heart disease, diabetes, migraine, asthma, depression, ulcerative colitis, and many other ills. Almost all headaches and non-injury-caused back pain are stress related. At least one-third of America’s adult population suffers from high blood pressure, closely correlated with stress.

Thus, a mechanism that was designed to help us survive, when unchecked, becomes a source of disease and premature death. “There is absolutely no question that one can overshoot the stimulation of the endocrine system,” said René Dubos, author of *Man Adapting*, “and that this has physiological consequences that last throughout the whole lifetime of the organs.”<sup>12</sup>



Years before stress was recognized as the serious health problem that it is, Maharishi spoke about it and proposed that practicing TM could reduce the impact of stress. He defined *stress* as an imposition on the body and nervous system caused by experience our body and mind can't comfortably handle, whether relatively mild (a loud noise, bright light, a surprise) or extremely intense (war, tsunamis, physical or sexual abuse), which leaves a deep impression on us but which can be neutralized or removed by gaining sufficient rest to heal it. TM, by providing the depth of rest necessary to dissolve this stress, clears the system day by day for healthier functioning and greater enjoyment.

“I started TM about three months ago,” a new meditator said. “I haven't missed a single session and I am starting to see results. I am off my antidepressants and feel less anxious. The most dramatic result I had was when I realized that the chronic back pain between my shoulders, which I've had for years and years, simply disappeared. I suppose the pain was from tension, and with TM my back feels more relaxed.”

Hans Selye, M.D., Ph.D., pioneer stress researcher and former Director of the Institute of Experimental Medicine and Surgery at the University of Montreal, was once asked to comment on TM. He said, “Research already conducted shows that the physiological effects of Transcendental Meditation are exactly the opposite of those identified by medicine as being characteristic of the body's effort to meet the demands of stress.... I would refer to it as a method which so relaxes the human central nervous system that it can live with stress better, that it doesn't suffer from stress.”<sup>13</sup>

But isn't *some* stress good for us? Some people think so. "Stress calls out the best in people," the argument goes. "Without stress we wouldn't be motivated." In response, some researchers have sought to fine-tune our common vocabulary by speaking of "distress" and "eustress," *eu* being Greek for "good."

Dr. Fred Travis of the Center for Brain, Consciousness, and Cognition, suggests that it might be less confusing to distinguish between stress and *challenge*. *Challenge, he told me, is a good thing:*

When you're under challenge, you see more clearly, you hear more distinctly. Your brain functions more quickly. We like challenge, and we want to have a climate of challenge in our schools and our businesses. We welcome challenge in our lives, because it's what allows us to grow and to progress. It drives us to devote our attention and our resources to go to the next level.

What happens when the challenge gets too high, Travis says, is that "the CEO functions of the brain shut down, the amygdala gets activated, and we go into the stress response. Under stress we get tunnel vision. As our bodily systems mobilize to deal with the situation, the frontal lobes, that allow us to put the current situation into a larger context, go offline. We become highly alert, but we lose all perspective."

Just as the adaptive or stress response is fundamentally the same time after time, TM also produces an integrated response, consistent and predictable, but as Dr. Selye explained, *in the opposite direction*: muscles relax; blood flow in some areas of the body increases (indicating a

relaxation and dilation of the blood vessels); breathing becomes shallower and slower; heart rate slows down; and cardiac output decreases. Changes in blood chemistry, especially a decrease in the stress hormone cortisol, indicate less stress.<sup>14</sup> [Table 6-1]

**TABLE 6-1: COMPARISON OF TM AND STRESS RESPONSE**

Body Function	Stressful Reaction	TM Effect
Muscles	Tense	Relax
Blood vessels	Constrict; extremities are cold	Relax; extremities are warmer; blood flow to brain increases
Heart	Pumps faster and pumps more blood	Slows down
Breathing	Is quicker and heavier	Is slower and shallower
Blood chemistry	There is increased adrenaline; more cortisol	There's a decrease in cortisol
Skin resistance	Decreases; more perspiration	Increases more than during sleep

So it's not surprising that almost everyone who learns the TM technique remarks that they feel less tense, less worried. Steve Yellin, author of *The 7 Secrets of World Class Athletes*, said:

TM has been an absolutely wonderful addition to my life. The first benefit I noticed is when I stopped throwing my racket when I got mad playing tennis. That alone was worth the price of admission. Over the years I have become more peaceful, more in touch with who I am, and just a better

all-around person. My parents also started TM around the same time as myself. My father said it saved his life. He was a fighter pilot based on Iwo Jima during World War II, and when he returned to the States after the war, he suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder. The memories of what he saw on that island never left him, and he felt himself being consumed by it. When he started TM, those memories started to leave, and for the first time he began to experience some peace inside.

With millions of people seeking relief from stress, and with a growing number of meditation practices and stress-management programs available in the marketplace, some doctors have felt it important to make distinctions between what works well and what doesn't. Gary Kaplan, M.D., a faculty member at Hofstra University School of Medicine in New York, cautioned that "well-controlled research has shown that for reducing stress and promoting health, all meditation practices are not equal. People who come to me for relief from stress and stress-related disorders need a meditation that won't take a long time to master and will produce consistent results right away."

Kaplan said that he recommends TM because of the research, which has revealed "extensive physiological effects." These effects, he believes, stem from the fact that TM allows the mind to "settle very deeply inward. TM teachers call this *transcending*. It's what sets Transcendental Meditation apart, and why the practice is so beneficial for mind and body right from the start."

Given that somewhere around 80 percent of all illness is now said to be caused or complicated by stress, regular practice of

TM should logically result in a growing freedom from all forms of illness. This seems to be the case.

*RESEARCH: ILLNESSES AND  
HEALTH CONDITIONS IMPROVED BY TM*

Most of the meditators I've interviewed have made a point of mentioning improved health and resistance to disease. Because some of the results they reported are intangible or difficult, if not impossible, to measure—how does a researcher know if someone really has “more energy” or “fewer headaches”?—I have restricted this section to conditions that have been researched with high-quality studies, almost all of them controlled, prospective trials in which study volunteers were randomly assigned either to learn TM or to be in a control group, and then both groups were carefully followed.

A substantial and lengthy book could easily be written on the demonstrated benefits of TM purely for health. I only have space to survey *some* of these benefits here, and point you toward further information if you're interested in learning more.

**Asthma.** It is now recognized that stress and anxiety can play a large role either in setting off an asthma attack or in exacerbating the asthma once it starts. Thus, TM, with its profound ability to help a person quickly and deeply relax, could be extremely useful for the 20 million asthma sufferers in the United States and the 300 million worldwide, and could likely help prevent some of the 250,000 annual asthma-related deaths.

Many people do report a decrease in asthma symptoms after learning TM, but so far only a few studies have been performed. One experiment, with asthma patients at the medical school at the University of California, Irvine, came out with some very promising results. Over a six-month period, 74 percent of asthma sufferers felt that TM had improved their condition, and 55 percent were judged improved by their physicians. More significantly, physiological measurements found that 94 percent of the participants had decreased “airway resistance” [Figure 6-1], which meant that they could breathe more comfortably.<sup>15</sup>

### BENEFITS FOR BRONCHIAL ASTHMA PATIENTS

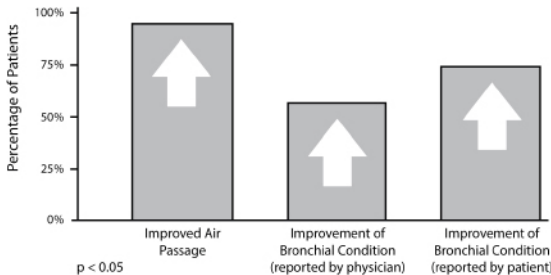


Figure 6-1

Asthma patients who were instructed in TM showed significant improvement in just a few months.

**Anxiety.** Anxiety can be a relatively normal condition (some nervousness or apprehension, sweating, feeling a little shaky before taking a test or giving a speech to a tough audience), but if it stays on without a precipitating cause, it can become a serious health concern. Ongoing anxiety is known as *trait* anxiety—a persistent condition of worry and

apprehensiveness—as opposed to *state* anxiety, the temporary kind of emotional/physiological upset. Trait anxiety is known to deplete energy, trigger insomnia, and greatly reduce effectiveness and happiness. Millions of people take medications for their anxiety, but most if not all of these drugs have unpleasant or dangerous side effects.

A large number of studies on TM have found a reduction of anxiety among many segments of the population, including high-school and college students, factory workers, business professionals, military personnel, prisoners and juvenile offenders, and the elderly. Rather than look at several smaller-scale studies, I'll tell you about one big one: a meta-analysis of 146 different studies of trait anxiety. The research compared the effectiveness of TM and various relaxation techniques such as Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), biofeedback, and the Relaxation Response, and was published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. As you can see from the summary graphic [Figure 6-2], *TM proved to be twice as effective as all other methods*, none of which produced results any better than a placebo.<sup>16</sup>

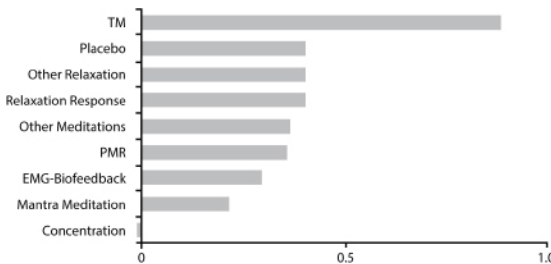


Figure 6-2

In a meta-analysis of 146 studies comparing TM and various relaxation techniques, TM was twice as effective in reducing anxiety as all other methods.

**Insomnia and Sleep Disturbances.** Insomnia is a common symptom of stress. Numerous books and articles offer helpful suggestions to alleviate it, yet millions of people resort to sleep medications, most of which have negative side effects and can be addictive. Many people have reported an improved ability to sleep after beginning TM. So far, though, only a few reliable scientific studies are available. In one, at the University of Alberta, the Canadian psychologist Donald Miskiman followed a small group of people suffering from insomnia over a full year. In the 30 days prior to learning TM, it took them an average of 75.6 minutes to fall asleep. In the following months, they were able to sleep after an average of 15 minutes.<sup>17</sup>

In another study, published in the *Journal of Counseling & Development*,<sup>18</sup> patients in a U. S. Veterans Administration (VA) hospital who were taught the TM technique for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) showed a significant reduction in insomnia after four months, in contrast to others randomly assigned to receive psychotherapy. [Figure 6-3] Hundreds of thousands of American soldiers have returned from war suffering from PTSD; one of their symptoms is the inability to sleep well. And even if they manage to *fall* asleep, they frequently awaken to terrible nightmares, often drenched in sweat and screaming in fear. Later in the book I'll review research showing that TM has been highly effective in helping them.

DECREASED INSOMNIA



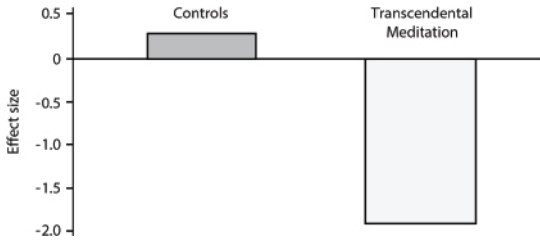


Figure 6-3

Compared to patients randomly assigned to psychotherapy, PTSD patients who learned TM had significantly reduced bouts of insomnia.

Hlomi Maseko, a college computer-skills teacher in Johannesburg, South Africa, told this encouraging story: “I was having a problem at night when it was time to sleep. I was having nightmares, and these nightmares bothered me since I was so young. When I was taught the TM technique, suddenly I just observed that now these nightmares are fading away from my life. Since then, till today, I’ve never experienced nightmares again in my life.”

Although there is no way to know with absolute certainty what happened to Mr. Maseko, this seems a perfect example of how the release of stress during TM liberates people from the “demons” of the past.

**ADHD.** About 4.5 million American children are currently diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); more than half are taking prescription medications such as Ritalin, which is an amphetamine or “speed” drug. Similarly large populations in England, Australia, and elsewhere are in the same boat. And the problem doesn’t stop

with children: eight to ten million American adults are also dealing with ADHD.

The drugs used to treat this condition—which are dangerous enough to warrant a mandatory “black box” warning from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration—are often effective in temporarily reducing symptoms, but they can also cause serious side effects.<sup>19</sup> Long-term effects may include heart problems, liver damage, psychiatric disturbances, and even sudden death. Some research suggests that taking these drugs in childhood may lead to lifelong addictions to stronger, illegal stimulants such as cocaine.

A team of researchers led by Sarina Grosswald, a cognitive learning specialist; William R. Stixrud, a clinical neuropsychologist; and brain researcher Fred Travis, noted that the typical symptoms of ADHD look very much like the symptoms of stress. Stress makes it difficult for anyone to pay attention, get organized, and stay concentrated on what needs to be done. People under stress frequently suffer from insomnia, and have hyperactive minds that are difficult to focus. The researchers hypothesized that because TM has proven itself eminently successful in taming stress, it could be effective in alleviating symptoms of ADHD, and undertook a small study to test their theory.

At a middle school in the Washington, D.C., area, a group of children ages 11 to 14 with a previous diagnosis of ADHD practiced TM for ten minutes twice a day in their classroom. At the end of the three-month trial, the students showed more than a 50 percent reduction in stress and anxiety levels, and a significant lessening of ADHD symptoms. Attention span, organizing skills, working memory, and ability to

self-regulate behavior all improved. As a result, teachers were able to teach more, and the students were able to learn more.<sup>20</sup>

Dr. Linda Handy, the academic director of the school, commented: “It’s working. It’s improving their lives. It’s improving their sense of self. It’s empowering them.... I see it making a big difference, and I think that their futures are going to be so much brighter because of it.”<sup>21</sup>

A larger follow-up study by the same research team found similar results, and also looked at the brain-wave patterns of the young students. After three months there was increased activity in the prefrontal cortex, the “executive center” or CEO of the brain responsible for decision making, attention, and concentration. After six months of TM practice, according to Dr. Grosswald, “measurements of distractibility moved into the normal range.”<sup>22</sup>

**Cardiovascular Disease.** “Heart disease is the number one threat to your health today,” says cardiologist Robert H. Schneider, M.D., Director of the Center for Natural Medicine and Prevention. “Heart disease now accounts for more deaths in the United States and other developed countries than the next sixteen causes of death combined,” including twice as many deaths as cancer.<sup>23</sup>

In case you think heart disease is mostly a problem for men, as it once was, Dr. C. Noel Bairey Merz, Director of the Women’s Heart Center and the Preventive and Rehabilitative Cardiac Center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, set the record straight: “Heart disease is the leading killer among women in the United States,” she says. “Heart

disease kills many more women than all cancers combined, including breast cancer.”<sup>24</sup>

Dr. Mehmet Oz, the eminent heart surgeon, author, and TV host, said during a recent talk in New York, “As a heart surgeon, I see the effects of stress on the heart as the leading cause of death in the Western world. This meditation, we believe, can help a lot of people. It’s important to understand exactly how TM reduces stress and stress-related disorders.” Dr. Oz then outlined what he sees as the three major risk factors for heart disease—high cholesterol, diabetes, and hypertension—and explained how TM has been shown to combat them all.

First, he cited a one-year study on people with high cholesterol that found a reduction of 10 percent or 30 milliliters. “If you’re on medication for cholesterol,” Dr. Oz said, “we *hope* you can get 30 milliliters lower.”<sup>25</sup> [Figure 6-4]

### REDUCTION OF HIGH CHOLESTEROL

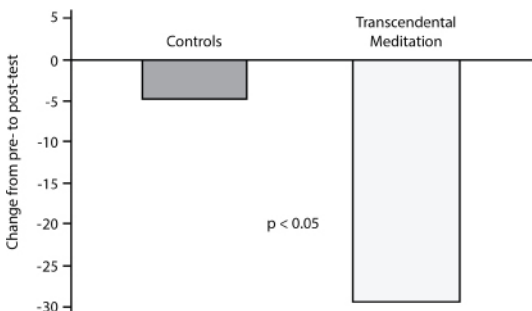


Figure 6-4

Individuals with high cholesterol practicing the TM technique showed a significant reduction in cholesterol levels when compared to a control group.

The second major risk factor for heart disease is diabetes. “A randomized clinical trial funded by the NIH,” Dr. Oz said, “found improvements in insulin resistance, glucose and even insulin levels themselves, after just four months of TM practice, in over 100 people who had coronary blocks.” Oz called this “a dramatic change.” The study Dr. Oz referred to was published in *Archives of Internal Medicine*, a publication of the American Medical Association.<sup>26</sup>

Stress has been strongly implicated in hypertension, so it is no surprise that TM has been effective time and again in helping to reduce high blood pressure, the third main risk factor Dr. Oz addressed in his talk. He cited a study, published in the medical journal *Hypertension, of people* with high blood pressure who were assigned either to TM, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, or to a health-education program on how to reduce blood pressure through diet and exercise. The muscle-relaxation technique had some beneficial effects, but as you can see [Figure 6-5], the reduction in blood pressure in the TM group was more than 2.5 times greater.

“Those practicing the TM technique,” Dr. Oz reported, “had a significant reduction in systolic and diastolic blood pressure, of 11 and 6, respectively. Those are big numbers. We don’t get these kinds of results all the time with medications.”<sup>27</sup>

These three factors—high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and insulin-resistant diabetes—are what “drive heart disease,” Dr. Oz said.

## REDUCTION OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

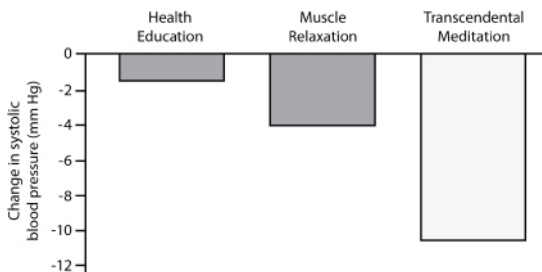


Figure 6-5

Individuals with high blood pressure who learned TM showed a reduction in systolic and diastolic blood pressure after three months that was both clinically and statistically significant.

Finally, Dr. Oz reported on a long-term (ten-year), randomized study, published in the journal *Circulation*, which assessed the effects of TM on heart disease, stroke, and death in elderly heart patients. Those who were assigned to practice the TM technique were found to have *47 percent lower incidence of heart disease, stroke, and death.*

*“This impact in the TM group is stunning—unimaginable,”* Dr. Oz said. And if you’ve seen him on TV, you may be able to visualize his enthusiasm when he said this. *“When you talk about these causes of death and you can reduce them by that much, as well as nonfatal strokes and nonfatal heart attacks, these are spectacularly large impacts.”*<sup>28</sup>

Another heart condition afflicting millions of people is congestive heart failure (CHF). A study at the University of Pennsylvania on African Americans with mild to moderate

heart failure found that when tested after three months and again after six months, those who were randomly assigned to learn TM made significant gains both in their ability to exercise (as measured by a standard six-minute walk test), and in symptoms of depression that typically accompany CHF. The 2007 study, published in the journal *Ethnicity and Disease*, is especially meaningful because African Americans have twice the death rate from congestive heart failure as white Americans.<sup>29</sup>

## DR. OZ SPEAKS OUT FOR TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

Toward the end of April, 2012, Dr. Mehmet Oz took center stage at *The Dr. Oz Show* and told his TV audience that he had been practicing Transcendental Meditation for three years, and had “decided to offer the technique to everyone on my team.” He shared with them that the day after the first 20 people (of his staff of 200) learned to meditate, things began to change.

“The first thing I noticed was a change in the tone and the texture of the dialogue—away from dwelling on problems towards a much more thoughtful, insightful, clever way of *solving* problems. Instead of highlighting the issues that were separating us, my team was deriving bliss and joy from finding solutions.”

“Speaking as a scientist,” he said, “the amazing thing about Transcendental Meditation is the very well established research showing that the technique impacts things that we didn’t think were changeable. If you look at basic high blood pressure, which is the number one cause of death, you can

actually reduce your blood pressure significantly with just using Transcendental Meditation. You can also reduce cholesterol, atherosclerosis, obesity, risk of stroke— even reduce death rates due to cardiovascular disease.”

But these health benefits, as great as they are, are only “the tip of the iceberg,” he said. “We all have within us a deep well of creativity, which we can access if we can settle down into those deep, calm places, those serene moments that Transcendental Meditation offers. As a result, we feel free and better about ourselves, we make better health choices, we communicate better with our loved ones, our colleagues, our friends.

“I believe quite strongly, you would be very wise to give it a try.”<sup>30</sup>

**High Cholesterol.** Fifty million Americans have what is considered an excessively high level of cholesterol floating through their bloodstreams, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Dietary changes, exercise, and yoga can definitely help (see the groundbreaking work of Dr. Dean Ornish), but most people don’t seem to have the motivation or discipline to make those changes and end up taking medications, many of which have serious side effects. Fortunately, several studies have charted a significant reduction in cholesterol levels through TM practice alone. Among other research, the prospective study illustrated in Figure 6-4 (above) found a substantial reduction in total cholesterol over an 11-month period, with no change in diet or exercise.



**Diabetes.** Diabetes is increasingly prevalent in American society and around the world. According to the American Diabetes Association, 26 million children and adults in the United States—more than 8 percent of the population—have diabetes. And the numbers are increasingly rapidly, as they are, for example, in the UK, where an estimated 3 million people are now affected. In India, the number is approaching 45 million and the disease has been called an epidemic by the *International Journal of Diabetes in Developing Countries*. The annual diabetes health-care cost in the U.S. is currently at least \$250 billion, and that number is also rising.<sup>31</sup> The research Dr. Oz cited above, showing decreased insulin resistance in people practicing TM, holds great promise for those dealing with this difficult and often deadly disease.

Several long-term studies assessing the impact of TM on diabetes are now under way. In one, Ahmed Mohammed, M.D., Medical Director of the Winnebago Indian Hospital in Nebraska, is studying the effects of TM on diabetic patients in members of the tribe. Diabetes is a huge problem for Native American peoples; in Nebraska, approximately 80 percent on the reservation are diabetic. “I believe that stress has been a precipitating factor in our losing the battle with diabetes,” says Dr. Mohammed. “We’re doing our best in controlling the diet. We’re also using all the standard medications. Even so, we’re still having problems controlling the diabetes. It has to be another factor, which I think is stress. I believe that Transcendental Meditation will have a positive impact both short-term and long-term.”

Betty Earth, an elder who lives on the reservation and is participating in the study, said, “I’m a diabetic, and because of doing TM, I’ve gotten my sugar levels almost where they

are supposed to be, where before, sometimes the numbers weren't even on the meter.... Through TM, I've stopped using so much insulin—which is a big plus.”

“We hope,” said Dr. Mohammed, “that by doing this study, we will use it to benefit our local native populations, and this will be a starting point for us to move from locally treating the Winnebago to involving the whole Indian population in the country.”

“I lost both my parents and two sisters to diabetes,” said Warner Earth, Betty's husband. “That's why I'm so grateful and thankful that TM was introduced to us. I know it's going to help my people.”

“To me,” Betty Earth said quietly, “this study is important because if we can get this under control, our children will be able to sit and meditate with their grandparents—because their grandparents will still be around. That's my hope. That's what I would like to see.”<sup>32</sup>

**Hypertension (High Blood Pressure).** Despite decades of research, high blood pressure remains something of a mystery: about 90 percent of cases have no known cause. Its potentially devastating effects *are* well known, though. It's one of the main risk factors for stroke, heart attack, aneurysm, and kidney failure, and contributes to hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis), which in turn, by constricting the blood vessels, further raises blood pressure. Blood vessels in the retina of the eyes can burst or bleed from the high pressure, causing loss of vision; and life expectancy is generally shortened by chronic, persistent hypertension. Affecting at

least a billion people, it is considered the leading cause of premature death in the world.

Many papers have been published on the impact of TM on hypertension. Since more conclusive evidence is available in a meta-analysis (which, you'll recall, pools together a group of reliable studies) than in single studies, I'll report here on two large meta-analyses performed over the last decade.

In the first, published in the *American Journal of Hypertension*, Dr. James W. Anderson, professor of medicine at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, looked at nine studies involving more than 700 people with blood pressure ranging from normal to hypertensive. He found that the people randomly assigned (in the various studies) to TM practice had an average decrease of 4.7 points in systolic and 3.2 points in diastolic pressure. These are statistically significant numbers, but more important, they are *clinically* significant. According to Anderson, lowering blood pressure this much could result in substantial reductions in risk for atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease—as much as 15 to 20 percent, according to Dr. Robert Schneider—and without drug side effects.<sup>33</sup>

The second meta-analysis, supported by a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), was larger in scope, drawing upon 107 published, peer-reviewed research papers with a total of almost 1,000 participants that studied the effects of TM and various relaxation techniques on blood pressure. In addition to TM, the study looked at biofeedback, stress management, and progressive muscle-relaxation techniques. The findings were really quite amazing, even to a strong believer in the efficacy of TM: not one of the methods

other than TM led to any statistically significant improvements. Similar to the Anderson meta-analysis (above), TM was found to improve blood pressure by an average of 5 points systolic and 2.8 points diastolic.<sup>34</sup>

One additional study, published in 2004 in the *American Journal of Hypertension*, deserves to be mentioned. Along with the epidemic in obesity that is sweeping across not only the United States but the entire world, there has been a frightening increase in childhood hypertension. As Dr. Schneider commented, “The cardiovascular disease process begins in childhood. Childhood risk factors, for example, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, which are epidemics in children today, track into adulthood.”

Dr. Vernon Barnes, a physiologist and research scientist at the Georgia Prevention Institute of the Medical College of Georgia, undertook to discover whether TM could be helpful for this vulnerable population. With a grant from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, he studied 100 high-school students with blood pressure in the high-normal range. Half were taught TM, while the control group was given daily 15-minute “lifestyle education” talks on weight management, diet, and exercise and instructed to take a 15-minute daily walk. Tested at the start, at the end of four months, and again four months after the study ended, the TM group’s blood pressure—both systolic and diastolic—improved significantly compared to the control group.

High blood pressure, said Dr. Barnes, “is not a problem that occurs suddenly at age 45 or 50. It starts at a young age. We wanted to look at intervention with young people, because if your blood pressure comes down even a few millimeters

when you are young, and you can maintain that into adulthood, you can significantly reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease.”<sup>35</sup>

The standard treatment for high blood pressure offered by almost all physicians is medication. As everyone knows by now, these hypertension drugs universally have side effects that range from the unpleasant to the dangerous. What if TM could do as good a job, in a natural way and without side effects? Robert Herron, a consultant on health policy and medical-cost reduction, teamed up with Robert Schneider and a group of other researchers to test this hypothesis. In a study published in 1996 in the *American Journal of Managed Care*, they reported that compared with the five leading anti-hypertension drugs over a period of 20 years, TM not only had the most health benefits, it also had by far the lowest cost: ranging from 23.7 percent to 72.9 percent lower than the medications.<sup>36</sup> [Figure 6-6]

### COST-EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

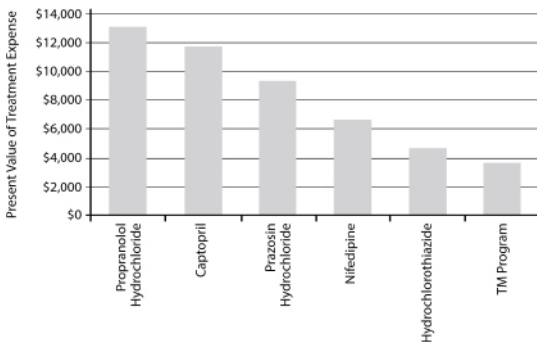


Figure 6-6

**Cancer.** To the best of my knowledge, no research has yet been published on the incidence of cancer comparing meditators to nonmeditators, other than a study I'll discuss shortly that compared statistics of medical-care usage for all kinds of conditions. However, a study of older women with breast cancer found a strong positive impact on quality of life among those who learned TM.

This research, reported in the journal *Integrative Cancer Therapies*, studied 130 breast-cancer patients (stage II to stage IV) with an average age of 63. In addition to the physical ravages of the disease, women with breast cancer typically suffer greatly from exhaustion as well as emotional and psychological trauma, fear, and uncertainty about the outcome and about their future. Over an 18-month period, this study found that TM significantly reduced stress and was helpful for these women's mental health and emotional and social well-being, so much so that the eight researchers concluded: "It is recommended that this stress-reduction program, with its ease of implementation and home practice, be adopted in public health programs."

Rhoda Pomerantz, M.D., one of the study's coauthors and Chief of Gerontology at Saint Joseph Hospital in Chicago, commented, "It is wonderful that physicians now have a range of interventions to use, including Transcendental Meditation, to benefit their patients with cancer. I believe this approach should be appreciated and utilized more widely."<sup>37</sup>

**Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).** Every day in the United States, 18 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars commit suicide. More die every year by their own hand than in combat, driven to this extreme measure by the

psychological pain and unrelenting anxiety of post-traumatic stress.

According to CNN anchor Candy Crowley, “In 2010, more than 408,000 vets with a primary or secondary diagnosis of PTSD were treated at Veterans Administration medical centers and clinics,” but they are only part of the picture. “Nearly 50 percent of veterans with PTSD have not received any help for it,” and of those who do seek help, at least half receive treatments that help only marginally, if at all, to alleviate their suffering.<sup>38</sup>

For everyone afflicted with PTSD, whether stemming from war or any other traumatic experience such as rape, domestic violence, an accident, or a natural disaster such as an earthquake or tsunami, the TM program holds great potential for relief and healing. This is exciting news because, as *The Washington Post* reported a few years back, citing a statement from “a panel of the federal government’s top scientists”: “The majority of treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder that are used to treat hundreds of thousands of veterans lack rigorous scientific evidence that they are effective.”<sup>39</sup> The report emphasized that some of the treatments *might* work, but that none of them—neither talk therapies nor the drugs and cocktails of drugs typically used—had been scientifically verified.

TM is emerging as a solution that *does* work. Compared to therapy and to medications with all their side effects, it is highly cost-effective, and it is safe. One former soldier who learned TM said that it was providing “enormous relief from the constant anxiety attack my life had become.”

The first study on TM and PTSD was conducted by two researchers from the University of Colorado School of Medicine and published in the *Journal of Counseling & Development* in 1985.<sup>40</sup> James S. Brooks, M.D., and Thomas Scarano, Ph.D., randomly assigned a group of veterans with PTSD to either learn TM or receive a standard course of psychotherapy. After three months, they found that in contrast to the group receiving counseling (who showed no substantial improvements), the TM group had a significant reduction in emotional numbness—a frequent PTSD symptom—as well as greatly reduced anxiety and alcohol-related problems. They also had less trouble with insomnia and depression. Their family lives improved, and they were better able to find and hold down a job.

A more recent pilot study on a small group of veterans ranging from age 25 to 40, who had served in Iraq, Afghanistan, or both from ten months to two years, was conducted by Norman Rosenthal, Sarina Grosswald, and colleagues. The study, published in 2011 in the journal *Military Medicine*, found a 50 percent reduction in PTSD symptoms after just eight weeks of TM practice, along with what Grosswald described as “dramatic improvements in quality of life.”<sup>41</sup>

These are small studies, but the results they found, coupled with the experiences of veterans who have learned TM, cry out for both more substantial research and more widespread application of this simple practice. The need is great.

“You can talk about it,” one former soldier said. “You can take the drugs. You can get away from the combat environment and get into a different environment. But that



still doesn't relieve the fact that you still carry around that trauma and that stress. From my experience, I think TM will allow somebody to find that peace and release that stress."<sup>42</sup>

### *PREVENTION: MASTER KEY TO GOOD HEALTH*

Spending on health care in the United States is projected to reach the totally incomprehensible amount of \$4.3 *trillion* by 2017. But what do we Americans get in return for that enormous sum of money? As many readers of this book may know, the U.S. spends more per capita for health care than any other nation on Earth—a lot more—and yet our health “outcomes” lag far behind the best. According to a 2010 article in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, the U.S. ranks 37th in the world in overall health-care effectiveness, 39th for infant mortality, 43rd for adult female mortality, 42nd for adult male mortality, and 36th for life expectancy.<sup>43</sup>

We are exposed to periodic, heated public wrangling over health care, but if you listen carefully, you'll notice that the debate is never about either *health* or *care*; it is all about money and funding. The question you and I would consider of most vital importance—*What can be done to help people stay healthy?*—is never discussed, even though it seems like the most practical and intelligent solution to the health-care crisis.

This was Maharishi's view. “To build more hospitals to alleviate sickness and suffering for people who have already fallen ill is a laudable act of charity,” he said, but “it is infinitely more important to find ways and means of preventing people from falling sick and of ensuring that they will always enjoy good health.”<sup>44</sup> It is always beneficial, in

the words of an old proverb, to “avert the danger that has not yet come.”

During a press conference in 2004, an American reporter asked Maharishi what he thought about the high cost of health care and the fact that many people couldn’t afford it. Immediately Maharishi shot back: “It is *sickness* that costs money, not health. To be healthy, one has to be regular in the awareness of one’s own immortality of consciousness within himself. He does not need money. Money is needed when people fall sick, and more money is needed when the medicines are not able to cure the sicknesses. And more money and more money ... any amount of money can be spent, but if prevention is not instituted, there is no hope for the people to be healthy.”<sup>45</sup>

“Medicine traditionally stands on two pillars: prevention and cure,” Harvard Medical School’s Alexander Leaf, M.D., wrote in *JAMA*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. “For the past century, the profession has rallied almost exclusively under the banner of curative medicine.”<sup>46</sup>

This is especially true in the United States, which allots just 2 to 3 percent of its health-care budget to prevention. According to Dr. David Satcher, a former Surgeon General, and Director of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), prevention is “undervalued and poorly supported in our health system.... We spend well over 90 percent of our national health budget treating diseases and complications—many of which could have been prevented in the first place.”<sup>47</sup>

Even the meager sums allotted for “prevention” usually involve testing or “screening” (for example, mammograms or

blood workups), often at considerable expense. If you think about it, it's clear that these do not *prevent* illness; they merely let you know whether you have something wrong with you. At best, they can catch a problem in its early stages and try to prevent it from getting worse.

Real prevention is entirely different. It is a way of life designed to promote good health and thereby prevent illness from arising. Whether self-chosen or worked out in collaboration with a knowledgeable physician, it includes practical, personalized guidelines for diet, exercise, rest, "stress management," and whatever you need to live a healthy life, according to your specific needs, and your particular constitution and life circumstances. Conscientious physicians often do take a few minutes to urge their patients to lose weight, quit smoking, and get up off the couch, but much more than that they really cannot do in the limited time they have with each patient.

### *REDUCING HEALTH-CARE COSTS*

Several studies on medical-care usage in the United States and Canada have found dramatically reduced hospitalization and outpatient physician visits by people practicing TM. This is true for people of all ages, but especially for older individuals. At a time when health-care costs are rising and a large portion of the population is moving into the later years of life, this is surely one of the most significant results of TM, for individuals and for society.

In a study of data from the major U.S. health insurer Blue Cross and Blue Shield, published in the journal *Psychosomatic Medicine*, Dr. David Orme-Johnson compared

medical-care utilization over five consecutive years by 2,000 subscribers practicing the TM technique with a database of 600,000 members of the same carrier. Both hospital admissions and outpatient consultations were more than 50 percent fewer for the TM group in 16 of the 17 major medical treatment categories studied; the 17th involved hospital admissions for childbirth, which was virtually identical in the two groups.

In the over-40 age group, the reduction was more than 70 percent. Orme-Johnson found a reduction of 87 percent in treatment for cardiovascular disorders, 55 percent for benign and malignant tumors, 73 percent for respiratory disorders, and 87 percent for neurological disorders. [Figure 6-7] These figures indicate the huge cost savings that could occur if the TM program were incorporated into existing health-care programs.<sup>48</sup>

### DECREASED NEED FOR MEDICAL CARE AND HOSPITALIZATION

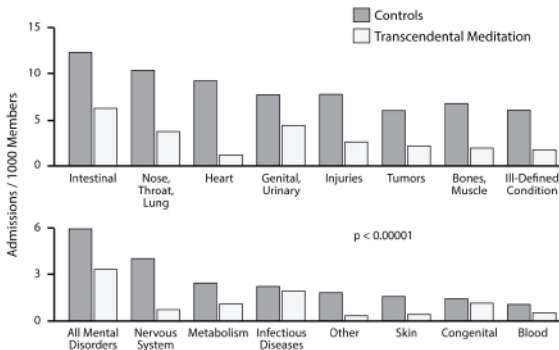


Figure 6-7

Health-care usage typically increases as a person grows older, reflecting declining health. As the population ages in the U.S. and Europe, this greater need for health care is a serious concern—not only for individuals worried about their medical bills, but also for government health services and insurance providers. Could TM offer a way to slow or reverse this trend?

In a paper published in 2005 in the journal *Social Behavior and Personality*, Robert Herron, Ph.D., and Kenneth Cavanaugh, Ph.D., tracked payments made to physicians by 163 TM practitioners over the age of 65 for five years, versus payments for 163 control subjects matched for age, sex, and other factors. The TM group's five-year cumulative payments were a highly significant *64.2 percent less* than the control group's payments.<sup>49</sup> Several other studies found similar results.

### *AYURVEDA AND THE REBIRTH OF NATURAL MEDICINE*

In the early 1980s, after more than 25 years of teaching TM and seeing its benefits corroborated by research, Maharishi made the bold step of undertaking a revival of *Ayurveda*, the 5,000-year-old Indian system of natural medicine. As part of this work, he enlisted some of the world's top Ayurvedic experts, with whom he then worked for years to develop a broad spectrum of tools for health and healing.

When I first heard that he was investigating Ayurveda, I was skeptical. I suppose I held the common Western bias against natural medicine—that it was unscientific, based on superstition, that its modalities were unproven, that kind of thing. But experience had taught me to trust in Maharishi's

insights and his intentions, so I challenged myself to be open to this new direction in his work. As I did that, I was so deeply impressed by the richness, logic, simplicity, naturalness, and effectiveness of Ayurveda that, in collaboration with experts in Ayurvedic medicine, I wrote several books about it.

As I have come to love the art and science of Ayurveda, it is hard for me to refrain from talking about it. But because of space considerations—the range of Maharishi’s contributions is so great, and I want to cover as much as I can in these pages—and the fact that there are fine books about Ayurveda available, I’m just going to share a few principles that have captured my admiration and appreciation, and encourage you to learn more on your own.

**Profoundly Holistic.** The word *Ayurveda* comes from the Sanskrit roots *ayus*, which means “life” or “life span,” and *veda*, which can be accurately translated as “knowledge, science, or wisdom.” So Ayurveda is the science of the life span, and even more, the broad-based knowledge, or wisdom, about life. Thus, the principles of Ayurveda are truly holistic: unlike modern Western medicine, it never investigates or considers an organ or body part, or even a bodily system, in isolation. It’s always about the *whole*—the interaction and interconnectivity of various parts of the body with each other and with the mind; the person with his/her relationships, physical environment, social settings, and work; the climate and time of year. The Ayurvedic *vaidya* (physician) is trained to take into account all of these factors—and more—both when diagnosing and when prescribing preventive measures or treatments.

**The Uniqueness of Every Individual.** Modern medicine tends to set down universal, one-size-fits-all prescriptions for good health: everyone should drink orange juice for breakfast, get so many grams of protein a day, minimize fatty foods, do a half-hour to an hour of aerobic exercise several times a week, and so on. By contrast, Ayurvedic medical practice is based on something extremely precious: that we are all unique, and so are our requirements for healthy living.

The constellation of factors that make up your individual constitution determines a great deal about you. Once you understand your constitution, you can make intelligent, informed choices about what you can eat and what you can't get away with, how much and what kind of exercise is best for you, how much rest you need, and so on. You'll understand what kinds of situations may upset you, and how to maintain or restore your balance.

In relationships, knowing your own and your partner's constitutional types can foster mutual understanding and appreciation, and minimize conflicts. If you are a parent, you can do your children a world of good by learning to feed them foods that will be strengthening rather than aggravating to their constitutions, guiding them toward the right type and amount of exercise, understanding their learning styles, and so on.

Descriptions and explanations of the basic constitutional types and the natural laws underlying them are pretty standard and can be found in many books and websites. The best way to determine your own constitution is by consulting with an Ayurvedic physician, or at least a health professional who's had considerable training and experience with Ayurveda. A

less reliable but potentially helpful method is to fill out one of the questionnaires available in books and online. Try an online search for “Ayurvedic Constitution Questionnaire.”

**Living in Tune with Nature.** I think we all instinctively feel that it would be a good idea to live “in tune with nature,” but what exactly does that mean? Ayurveda offers three complementary answers.

First, as discussed, it means being true to our own nature, our constitution, how we are built mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Second, it means organizing our lives to flow in harmony with the rhythms and cycles of the day and year. Eating cooling foods in the hot season and warming foods when it’s cold (Ayurveda is explicit about which foods fall into those and other categories); waking up when the energy of the Earth is fresh, and going to bed when it is winding down; taking one’s biggest meal near noon, the time when the “digestive fires” are strongest; and following as much of the recommended “Ayurvedic daily routine” as we can, are all strategies that help maintain health and strength. The Ayurvedic daily routine is well described in a number of books and websites.

Third, and most powerfully, living in tune with nature means aligning with the Cosmic Intelligence that has set up those cycles and rhythms and continues to administer and sustain them for the benefit of all life. Although this understanding is inherent in Ayurveda, Maharishi brought it out in an unusually clear and practical form. What distinguishes his Vedic approach to health is its emphasis on consciousness,



intelligence, as the ultimate healer. In addition to working with the body through purification procedures, strengthening herbs and tonics, exercise (including yoga), and diet, Maharishi's approach relies heavily on the ability of the active mind to settle to its least excited level. There, one's awareness opens to the unboundedness of pure consciousness—the silence where the laws of nature that govern the universe reside in a unified, unexpressed state. Body and mind enjoy deep restfulness.

Coming out from that experience, re-engaging in boundaries, the mind sparkles with the primordial energy that creates the stars. The body's self-regulating mechanisms are catalyzed by that contact. Healing processes are enlivened and strengthened. All of the health benefits we've been discussing in this chapter are the result.





## CHAPTER SEVEN

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### TM AND LONGEVITY: LIVING LONGER AND BETTER

“TM makes me look younger,” Australian journalist Sarah Wilson wrote in her blog. “I know this is vain ... but honest to God, part of the appeal of TM is its anti-aging properties. My skin has changed over the past two years. The muscles on my face have released, relaxed, and opened up. Honest to God!”<sup>1</sup>

It’s not just about how we look, though. TM’s “anti-aging properties,” as Wilson aptly phrased it, have been investigated by serious scientific research, and they are real. The evidence is compelling that the practice of TM slows down the aging process. The biological age of TM meditators—how well their bodies function—is well below their chronological age. This is what Keith Wallace, Michael Dillbeck, and their colleagues reported in a paper on the effect of TM on aging, published in the *International Journal of Neuroscience*.

#### *RESEARCH ON TM AND AGING*

We all age differently. Part of the reason, according to Wallace, is genetic, “but most of it is how we live life.” Biological aging is generally gauged by psychological and physiological tests of factors such as memory, blood pressure, hearing ability, vision, and reaction time. Wallace and Dillbeck used a standard test that measured three factors: systolic blood pressure (which generally gets higher);

near-point vision (which generally decreases, leading to reading glasses); and auditory discrimination of higher pitches, which also usually diminishes. The U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), said Wallace, “has gathered extensive data on aging using these measures.”

Wallace’s study found that compared to the norm of millions of people in the Health Service database, long-term TM meditators (meditating five years or longer) had biological ages an average of *12 years younger than their chronological age*: their bodies functioned as if they were 42 versus an “actual” average age of 54. One study participant’s biological age was 27 years younger than the number of years he had lived. Even short-term meditators were five years younger biologically than their numerical age. No wonder Sarah Wilson is happy with her skin!<sup>2</sup>

These results are not surprising, considering that many of the factors that usually increase (blood pressure, difficulty sleeping) or decrease (hearing, vision, vital capacity) as we age have been found—in more than 30 studies as of this writing—to move in the opposite direction in meditators. Figure 7-1 summarizes some of the more than 40 such parameters that have thus far been identified.<sup>3</sup>

## REVERSING THE EFFECTS OF AGING

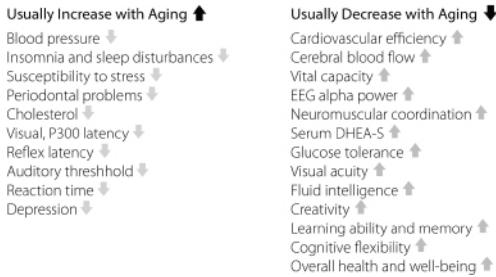


Figure 7-1

Each of the factors in this chart generally declines as we age, either increasing (such as blood pressure and disturbed sleep, shown in the left-hand column); or decreasing (such as visual ability, memory, and blood flow to the brain, shown in the right-hand column). Research has shown that TM practice reverses these negative changes.

Another experiment measured the level in meditators of DHEA-S (dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate). Known as “one of the most reliable biochemical markers of aging,” DHEA-S levels rise into our mid-20s and then decline steadily as we age, so that by the time we reach our 70s and 80s, these levels may have dropped by as much as 80 percent. Low levels of DHEA-S have been correlated with cardiovascular disease, breast cancer, and obesity, while higher levels appear to have an antidepressive effect and have been associated with longevity.

In a 1986 study of 423 practitioners of TM compared with 1,252 nonmeditators, the TM group had significantly higher DHEA-S levels in all 11 age groups of women and six of seven age groups of men over 40, and were comparable to

DHEA-S levels in control groups from five to ten years younger.<sup>4</sup>

“I was a fairly happy person, but I did have my anxieties,” a 42-year-old guidance counselor told me. “I liked my career, but it was often full of counseling disturbed teenagers. I have always had great empathy for my counselees, but unfortunately, I absorbed their problems. By the end of the day, I was tired and often under great tension. My physical examination the June before my instruction in TM found me in a rather unbalanced condition. My cholesterol count was up, my thyroid was sluggish, and I needed hormones. After five months of meditation, I had my yearly physical. Everything was normal and my ‘femininity index’ was up. My doctor said, ‘I don’t know what you’ve been doing, but you’re 15 years younger biologically than you were a year ago!’”

A 2005 paper in the *American Journal of Cardiology* tracked 202 older women and men with mildly elevated blood pressure. Subjects in the study participated either in the TM program, mindfulness meditation, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, or health education. This study, which began at an average age of 71 and followed the subjects for up to 18 years, found that the TM program reduced death rates by 23 percent compared with all the control groups.<sup>5</sup>

The final study I’d like to share with you was conducted by a group of Harvard researchers at nursing homes in the Boston-Cambridge area. In a carefully controlled, prospective study, 73 elderly residents in eight retirement and nursing homes (60 women and 13 men, with a mean age of 81) were randomly assigned to one of four groups: no treatment, the

TM program, mindfulness training, and Relaxation Response training. The researchers took great care to set up all three of the trainings to be equivalent in structure, and in the expectation of positive results. Three factors were to be measured: longevity, health, and cognitive facility.

By the conclusion of the three-year study, those in the TM group improved significantly more in all of the factors measured, including systolic blood pressure, learning ability, and cognitive flexibility. The survival rate varied greatly: 87.5 percent of those who took mindfulness training, 77.3 percent of the no-treatment controls, 65 percent of the Relaxation Response group, and 62.6 percent of the 478 elders who were not involved in any way in the study were still living. The TM group had a survival rate of 100 percent—they were *all* very much alive. Similar results have been found by other scientists.<sup>6</sup>

*“TO A MEDITATOR, THE AGING PROCESS IS DIFFERENT”*

One conclusion that seems to be emerging from the TM research on aging is that the longer one meditates, the healthier one becomes. This seems to be true not just of physical health, but of psychological and spiritual health as well. Typically, as they continue with TM, meditators report an increased sense of inner stability, happiness, and peace. This research, and the confidence it engenders—that as time goes by things will continue to improve—has profound implications for the huge and growing cohort of seniors throughout the world who are not yet enjoying the benefits of TM.

Advances in public health, nutrition, and the ability to cure formerly deadly diseases have granted extra years, even extra decades, to the lives of millions of people. But as is frequently the case, as one problem is solved, another set of challenges springs up. The trend of millions of people living longer is almost guaranteed to continue, but what kind of lives are they living? Some, notably in the baby-boom generation, are working hard to eat well, exercise, travel, learn new skills, and in general, remain flexible and open. But too often, as individuals advance into their later years, rather than opening up, life narrows down; rather than becoming increasingly joyful, each day frequently brings new ills, more loneliness, and new suffering. In our society, old age frequently brings with it not serenity and wisdom, but anxiety and quiet despair.

“To a meditator, the aging process is different,” Anne, a woman in her mid-50s told me. “As we get older, we feel younger. There is a reversal of the concept of age. Those of us who meditate look forward to reaching advanced states of unfoldment. If we’ve been meditating one or two years, we eagerly anticipate the time when we will have been meditating five or ten years, never once stopping to bemoan the fact that we will be that much older. We’re not too much concerned with our numerical age because we’re too occupied with enjoying life and finding new areas to explore.”

When she was 72, artist Rosita Zucker remarked, “TM has generated such inner bliss in my life. It has sweetened my relationships, and as a professional artist it has infused my work with brighter colors and greater liveliness. I work faster and with more clarity since starting TM.” She has also become more successful and better known internationally.



My friend Lillian, a longtime political activist, mother, and grandmother, met and married her second husband, an artist and retired art professor, when both were 70. They enjoyed 15 years of an intensely loving and joyful marriage (“It’s the best sex I ever had,” she confided to me once), rich with shared interests and friends, travel, and meditation. After a period of grieving when her husband passed on at 85, she has continued to enjoy her life, her children and grandchildren, and her community involvement.

She told me, “I’ve been meditating now for more than 30 years. I don’t take any medications—not one. I’m as healthy now, at 89, as I was when I was 25, and as interested in everything. The only thing that’s different is that I like to take a nap in the afternoon.”

In his early 80s, actor-director Clint Eastwood said, “I’m a great supporter of Transcendental Meditation. I’ve been using it for almost 40 years now. I think it’s a great tool for anyone to have.”

Michelle, a long-time meditator who described her age as “slightly south of 70,” said:

I suppose young people see me as an “elder”—or maybe just as old!—but I don’t feel that way at all. And it’s not just because I’m healthy, which I am—I take zero medications, I hike, I walk ten blocks each way to go shopping, I have no chronic pain. When I think of “me,” who I am, it’s not this body, but my consciousness, which is ageless. It’s bright and clear and steady, peaceful. And although I can’t prove it’s eternal or immortal, that’s how it feels—always there, always the same, ever lively and fresh. And that’s who I am. My

thoughts and feelings change, this reliable body will eventually give out, but that central stable core—that's me.





## CHAPTER EIGHT

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### FAMILY AND FRIENDS

From morning till night, at home and at work, we're involved with other people. Some of us interact with only a few individuals during the day; others may deal with hundreds. In each of those connections, we touch and color each others' lives, causing shifts and shades of feeling that affect our mood, our ability to concentrate, our health, and how we relate to all the other people we meet over the course of a day. For most of us, relationships are the source of our greatest happiness and our bitterest disappointments.

Some of our relationships are absolutely vital to our happiness and the well-being of those we relate to. Our children, intimate partners, parents, and closest friends are all deeply affected by how smoothly energy flows between us. Other relationships may seem unimportant, but even a momentary exchange can have a powerful impact on someone's life: a kind word to one who's feeling lonely or despondent, a harsh criticism or a put-down, a gratuitous kindness, a thank-you, or a word of praise.

#### *THE UNWANTED WAR*

I believe all of us want to have a positive influence on others, especially those closest to us. Given a choice, who wouldn't choose to be supportive, understanding, and kind? Dr. Haim G. Ginott began his classic best-selling book *Between Parent*

*and Child* by noting: “No parent wakes up in the morning planning to make a child’s life miserable. No mother or father says, ‘Today I’ll yell, nag, and humiliate my child whenever possible.’ On the contrary, in the morning many parents resolve: ‘This is going to be a peaceful day. No yelling, no arguing, and no fighting.’ Yet, in spite of good intentions, the unwanted war breaks out again.”<sup>1</sup>

This pattern extends to other relationships as well. Despite our values, desires, and resolutions, we sometimes find ourselves speaking and acting in ways we’re not proud of. We rarely become angry or upset when we’re fresh, rested, and having a good day. Anger, or any expression of negativity, is almost always due to an accumulation of stress, which blocks our better feelings, clouds our judgment, and short-circuits our patience. Instead of treating each other with warmth and acceptance, we argue, complain, criticize, yell, nag—and afterward we’re sorry, we feel that we acted contrary to our intentions, understanding, and better self.

“The peaceful home,” Ginott wrote, “like the hoped-for peaceful world, does not depend on a sudden benevolent change in human nature. It does depend on deliberate procedures that methodically reduce tensions before they lead to explosions.”<sup>2</sup>

### *SURPRISE! GROWTH IS NATURAL*

Because TM produces a profound state of healing rest and relaxation, it’s the kind of deliberate procedure Ginott called for—a strong dose of preventive medicine that can free us from the chokehold of tension and anxiety. It’s a way of allowing our authentic human nature to express itself,

released from the bondage of stress, which inhibits and distorts who we really are. As a result, very definite “benevolent” changes do occur.

The celebrated film director, David Lynch, confided that just a few weeks after learning TM, “My wife asked me, ‘What’s going on?’ I didn’t answer right away; there were a number of things she could have been referring to! But then she said, ‘The anger—where did it go?’ You see, I’d had a lot of anger, and I didn’t even realize it was gone. But *she* did.”

As the impact of stress diminishes, negative feelings tend to vanish, and negative reactions don’t even surface. We find that we are, as Bishop Desmond Tutu once said, “made for goodness, love, and compassion.”<sup>3</sup>

A Chicago accountant noted, “This has been the most noticeable change. Things that used to irritate me just pass by now. I feel myself more tolerant of people who used to upset me or make me angry. It almost seems as though I can’t get upset anymore. People are so much easier to get along with.”

Quite a few of the meditators I spoke to mentioned that they had “noticed” some aspect of growth, some positive changes in themselves, without trying to make them occur. I found this intriguing. One woman, for instance, said she had always been shy and self-conscious, but gradually “noticed a self-development which has given me greater self-confidence. I have much less fear surrounding emotional encounters with other people. My close relationships have become more intimate. I seem to be able to make friends with nearly everyone.”

One man even expressed wonderment at his progress: “I’m surprised at how much better I get along with people—especially people who have different values, philosophies of life, and religions. It’s much easier to accept people just as they are.”

Another said, “One of the main benefits of meditation for me is the ability to have more empathy or compassion for people. Understanding of other people just seems to be there. You give people the benefit of the doubt. You accept them for who they are.”

### *COMMUNICATION*

Therapists, seminar leaders, counselors, and other experts generally agree that one of the most important keys to good relationships is communication. This is a vital aspect of relationships that many meditators find improved. Their comments fall into two categories: the ability to express themselves better, and an increased understanding and perceptiveness about others.

The ability to express oneself clearly is a consequence of lucid thought, which in turn is a product of coherent brain functioning. As a young woman studying at the University of California, Berkeley, told me, “I’m more logical and can express myself more clearly.... The whole way I think has cleared.”

If we can think and speak what is on our minds and in our hearts clearly, we are on the road to good communication. The next step is freedom to disclose these thoughts and feelings; we need the courage and spontaneity to express

ourselves. “I’m more able to feel what I really am feeling, rather than what I think I *should* feel,” said a business student, “and I’m better able to act on those feelings instead of being frustrated.”

What about the receiving end of the communication process?

“I find that I’m more genuinely interested in other people,” a sociology professor said, “and I’m a better listener now. Before TM, I was so in love with my own thoughts that I used to interrupt people all the time. Now I can wait, pay attention, let the other person have their say—I’ll eventually have a chance to share my brilliant insights! I feel I’m more sensitive to the needs and feelings others have. A depth of understanding is present that was not there before.”

When we appreciate thoughts at subtler, more abstract levels of awareness during meditation, previously unfathomed depths of the mind become increasingly enlivened and available for our use. Thought and perception become more refined, and understanding becomes more profound. On a simple, sensory level, people often say that colors seem brighter, music has greater impact, food is more delicious. I think this explains, at least in part, why meditators find they are more sensitive to nuances of feeling and behavior, both in themselves and others.

### *GIVING AND RECEIVING*

“The purpose of social behavior,” Maharishi wrote in *Science of Being and Art of Living*, “is to give and receive for mutual benefit. The first fundamental in the art of behavior is: meet with warmth, and meet to give. If all people in society



behaved on this level of giving, social behavior could only result in the advancement and glorification of everyone's life."<sup>4</sup>

This may sound idealistic, but it is practical to the highest degree. When individuals meet with the intention of giving the best of themselves, based on what we might call "the principle of giving," relationships become more positive and mutually supportive. If people interact with the attitude, "What can I get out of this relationship? What's in it for me?" then no one gives, so no one receives, and the inevitable result is disappointment at best, frustration and anger at worst.

A relationship based on giving is mutually fulfilling. Not only does the receiver gain (and if both give, then both receive), but the giver gains simply by giving. "Giving," Erich Fromm wrote in his classic book *The Art of Loving*, "is the highest expression of potency. In the very act of giving, I experience my strength, my wealth, my power. This experience of heightened vitality and potency fills me with joy."<sup>5</sup>

It's easy to see how this could work well in our most intimate relationships. But this principle can be applied to *all* our interactions. Why not give as much as we can in every facet of our lives—with our parents and children, our students and teachers, our friends, our employer or employees, our co-workers, and with all those who give to us by serving our needs, such as our doctor and dentist, the mail carrier, the plumber, and the person at the supermarket checkout counter? Why not make a slight shift in attitude and decide to undertake our work, our occupation, not just as something we do in order to bring home a paycheck, but in the spirit of service to others? Giving does not have to be a monumental

task or manifest as an armful of gifts; all it takes sometimes is a smile, a kind word, or a sincere “Thank you so much!” As Mother Teresa was fond of saying, we can “do small things with great love.”

Of course, for the principle of giving to be most rewarding and effective (especially in our close relationships), it has to be practiced equally by both sides.

At the height of human development, in higher states of consciousness, a life of giving is entirely spontaneous, for a fulfilled person needs nothing from others and is free to give continually from an overflowing heart. “A sincere sense of giving can only arise on a level of contentment,” Maharishi said. “Only contented hearts and minds can think in terms of giving.”<sup>6</sup>

A meditating high-school teacher discovered this in her own life. “How can a person give love if she doesn’t first have love within herself? How can a person bring peace and harmony to her environment if she isn’t first peaceful and harmonious? It makes all the sense in the world to take the mind to an awareness of its own essential nature in bliss consciousness. Having gained that awareness, that joy, and that lightness of heart, one very naturally spreads love and enthusiasm to their surroundings.”

DAVID LETTERMAN AND HOWARD STERN  
DISCUSS TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION ON  
THE LETTERMAN SHOW, FEBRUARY 3, 2011

*Letterman:* One of the things I have admired about you is that you meditate. If I could learn to meditate, I’ll bet it would

help me. I know it's helped you. I just don't want to go someplace where people are sitting around without their shoes on, going, "Mmmmm"—I don't want to do that.

*Stern:* It's not like that. I learned when I was 18 years old. I was in college. My mother was severely depressed—her sister had died and she took it very hard, and things got to her. I became very worried about her.... Well, I get a call one day from this happy, elated woman, and I'm like, "Who *is* this?" and it's my mother. She tells me she was watching *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* and she saw Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and she went and learned Transcendental Meditation. My mother sounded transformed. She said to me, "Come on, I want to take you down to the TM Center." I did it, and it's the easiest thing I ever did. I've been doing it twice a day since I was 18, more than 35 years. I love to do it after the show. I find it very relaxing.<sup>7</sup>

Genuine giving can only flow from fullness. As a starving person can think only of finding food, a person who is lonely, depressed, and running on an emotional empty tank looks toward others for the sense of life and fullness he or she is missing. Relationships then become a means to "get what I need" rather than an opportunity to give. Paradoxically, as we saw above, it is in the very act of giving, sharing, helping, and empowering that we experience a sense of fullness and power, an outflow of love that is far more blissful and fulfilling than love coming from someone else.

We don't have to wait until we're enlightened and overflowing before we can start putting this principle into practice. The more we develop our creative potential, our

aliveness, expressiveness, and joy, the more we'll have to share with others.

Maharishi said:

Friendship, marriage, relationships—all these find their fulfillment spontaneously in the fully developed potential of the individual. One can be to others only to the extent one can be to oneself. If I can't have that fullness of life in myself, how can I have it for others?

Therefore, the key to relationships is to take care of our own Self. We meditate, and then our potentiality is being used more and more. With fully developed heart and mind, all relationships will be enjoyed, because we are able to give maximum of ourselves to others. When we are able to give maximum from our side, we are spontaneously capable of deriving maximum from the other side. It's always that way.<sup>8</sup>

### *INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS*

In these days of tremendous social upheaval, when so much of life is impersonal, unstable, and uncertain, it is only natural that people put great energy and hope into intimate relationships. At least there we hope for a haven and a place to be ourselves, unafraid and free. It isn't always easy, but we work at it; we do our best, and we seek the help of experts. Hundreds of thousands of books on relationships are sold year after year, seminars and workshops are packed, marriage and family therapists have full schedules—yet problems, tensions, and unresolved conflicts persist. Singles move from partner to partner looking for “the right one,” and the divorce rate remains high.

My research, especially my interviews with meditating couples, suggests that the practice of TM, by developing inner stability, expanded awareness, and a more loving heart, provides many people with a foundation for more successful marriages and partnerships. The relaxation and deep, natural rest brought about by the practice help to dissolve not only the stress and tension of everyday life, but also the “knots of karma,” the old, buried stresses and traumas, the deeply engrained impressions that have the power to elicit fear, inhibition, defensiveness, jealousy, anger, and other forms of negativity. As these stresses melt away in the deep rest of TM, behavior becomes less reactive, more spontaneous and joyful. Instead of operating out of loneliness and need, meditators increasingly bring inner fullness to the table. Out of many examples in my files, here is one:

“The most profound change in my ‘love life’ since I began meditating is the difference in the quality of my love, the quantity of my love, and my attitude toward loving and being loved,” said Celeste, an effusive young woman whose warmth and happiness are contagious. She continued:

First off, I enjoy the whole thing much more, I enjoy a relationship, and I think that’s because the feelings I have are more of an uplifting type than an undermining type. I feel full inside with my love and don’t need to be told every minute in every way, “I love you.” Of course I enjoy receiving love, but it’s comfortable and easy, and that’s the best thing.

Reminiscent of Maharishi’s words that “the key to relationships is to take care of our own self,” Celeste said:

I'm pretty sure that this change is due to my own inner development. I know that meditation has strengthened my ability to act more naturally and spontaneously. I feel more whole all the time, so whatever happens I'll still be whole. If someone comes and goes, I won't drown in misery as I used to think I would.

Meditation really can get you feeling fresh and whole, abundant with love. Who needs to have their stress and tiredness bog them down, and who needs to feel that life is getting commonplace and wearisome? A relationship is as strong and viable as the people who make it.

*FAMILY: "A CONNECTION STARTED TO FLOW"*

Despite changing values and definitions, the family—the place where we all grow up, whatever shape it takes—remains the basic social unit of our society. It's where we learn behavior patterns that mold our future ways of relating to others. Later, we invest huge amounts of time, energy, and emotion—not to mention, money!—in a family that we create.

In a world swirling with rapid and bewildering change, we would hope that the family could be a source of stability and security, and sometimes it *is* just that, but too often there are such failures of love and communication, such deep resentments and misunderstandings between spouses and generations, that the family is more a source of stress and frustration than a haven of harmony and shared love. Couples who once thought their feelings of love would carry them through *any* challenge that life posed, now battle to stay

afloat—or just battle. Many partners are too busy and stressed to really connect with each other or their children.

But we know all this; it's nothing new. What *is* new is strong evidence that it can be different. Here is part of a dialogue I had with a family of five, all practicing TM. John, 59, and his three adult children (Peter, 25, Ruth, 21, and Michael, 20) participated in the discussion.

**Ruth:** Before we started meditation, there wasn't much communication.

**Peter:** Ruth had been taking dancing lessons for years, and I didn't even know it. Nobody could talk to anybody.

**Peter:** My mother would come to my room, and I'd yell at her. Michael would ask if he could come in, and I wouldn't let him.

**Ruth:** In the family as a whole, no one had reached each other. Everyone was doing his own thing. We didn't know how to express care for each other. We were all caught in our own behavior patterns. Nobody knew anything about anyone else.

**Michael:** We cared, but no one could do anything about it. Now the family is getting closer and closer.

**John:** During the years prior to this, there had been a good deal of tension in the family. I felt that I had lost the children. I had a great longing for them. When meditation came into our lives, all of a sudden a connection started to flow—warmth came out and a feeling of closeness. In a home full of tension, it takes love away from everybody.

**Ruth:** Maharishi said that a family is a field of joy. I've just started realizing that it's also a source of love. This is its ideal state, and this is what TM is bringing our family to. Every aspect of the family has developed so much; we have so much open, good feeling for each other. It is really fantastic to discover that a

family is for this—to help each other grow and evolve. There’s a natural field of love.

“There’s a natural field of love ...” It isn’t that all of a sudden the whole family begins to agree on all their values and ideas, but rather, when people feel inner fullness and strength, when they feel their own worth, they accept themselves and others more easily and are no longer threatened by differing lifestyles.

“I no longer argue with my parents during my weekly visits with them,” a young woman in Philadelphia said. “They haven’t changed their views, nor have I radically changed mine—but our views tend to make little difference. My mother has started to meditate; my sister, also. Our relations have gotten tremendous. There’s more sincerity between us, a true bond that was not so noticeable before—a real closeness and appreciation of who we all are. It’s a delight to get together with them now, we laugh all the time.”

Kay Johnson, age 50, is a mother of four; two of her sons are in college. She and her husband, a television actor, are practicing TM. “When I went into this,” she told me, “I had a lot of anxieties and fears, and of course they were focused mostly on my family. I feel that I’m a better mother to my children now. My anxiety about my children, trying to manipulate them the way I thought they should go, made for very unhappy situations in the home. Now I’m finally able to let my children alone! The family life has improved tremendously.

“We used to argue a lot,” she added, “and now we don’t. We speak more softly, with more love, understanding, and



patience. We enjoy each other more. The children have benefited so much, it still seems miraculous.”

I heard many other couples and families say that their arguments had greatly diminished. Here’s an exchange I had with another family:

**JF:** Have you had any storms in your relationship that you feel meditation has helped you weather?

**Everyone** (*laughing*): Never!

**Father:** We’ve had storms in our family so intense, that most families, without meditation, would have been blown apart. But like the research says—recovery time is pretty quick. When we have an argument, our recovery time is fast.

**Daughter:** It’s amazing, actually. We can have flare-ups, and within a couple or three hours, we’ll be hugging and making up. It goes away like a line that you draw in the water or the air.

**Mother:** We learned a long time ago that words are powerful, so you don’t say things to hurt others. To always choose your words carefully. Maharishi gave us a nice tuning fork when he said, “Life is bliss. Just be happy.” If you have some raging times, some stormy times as a family, you have that tuning fork in the back of your mind. We know what it feels like to be happy and to have family harmony, so we do what we can, whatever it takes, to get back to that place.

### *CREATING FAMILY HARMONY*

Harmony does not mean uniformity; rather, it means the coherent interweaving of diverse elements, a mutually enriching coexistence. In the same way that a garden is beautiful because of its assortment of colors, shapes, and fragrances, so too are a family, a society, and a world rich and

vital because of the variety of elements that shape them. But harmony can be difficult to attain if people aren't centered enough to be comfortable with differing or even opposing viewpoints and values. In a world that is increasingly polarized and divided, and where divisions are often the source of discord and even violence, the ability to embrace differences is crucial for all of us.

If you believe that only *your* point of view is valid and correct, and you cannot see that the other person (or political party, or religion) also has its own truth and its own value, its legitimate place in the wholeness of things, it is only a short step to intolerance, disdain, angry words, and violent deeds. We see this everywhere in today's world, where built-up stress coupled with narrow vision and shortsightedness erupt daily on every continent.

In a family, parents can't help seeing that each child is unique in predispositions, interests, and abilities; good parents, loving parents, provide not merely acceptance, but real nourishment and support for each child to flourish, as a gardener waters and fertilizes the garden for the benefit of all the plants. Loving parents don't feel threatened if their child likes ballet instead of baseball (or baseball rather than ballet), chooses to learn motorcycle mechanics instead of quantum mechanics, or goes to Argentina to study tango rather than to medical school. The children, as Maharishi said, are all flowers in the garden of God.

Here is a daughter's story of a mother who gave her children a gift that "watered the root" so that all their individualities could blossom:

My mother was a deeply spiritual woman. She discovered TM in 1968, and felt it was her natural spiritual path in life. Yet she never forced it on her five kids. She let each of us choose whether we wanted to learn, and all of us eventually did. She never told us we had to meditate or that it was the “right” way. And while we’ve all integrated our practice of TM into our lives in our own unique way, every one of us still meditates, and all our children learned to meditate once they were old enough.

As adults, we scattered across the globe and wound up embracing a wide range of religions. We learned that TM not only doesn’t conflict with any spiritual tradition, it can actually help strengthen a person’s faith in whatever religion we ultimately choose to practice; and we all brought whatever we had to her hospice room there at the end. At various times over the four days before she died, we had ongoing prayers and chanting from different denominations going on in the room. All of us participated in everything openly, lovingly, and gladly, and then we sat quietly and meditated together around her bed. It was like the meditation wove us together into a larger prism, each of us reflecting the light we’d found through our different faiths and combining them into a single ray of silent, brilliant love onto her.

I think we all learned not just tolerance, but a deep appreciation for the beauty and value of every spiritual tradition through our mom. She gave us all the practice of meditation to help deepen our capacity for a meaningful, spiritual life, and then left the ultimate choice of pathway to us. Who could have imagined that we’d all circle back around in the end to bathe her in the very same light that she’d helped us each develop in ourselves?

## *LOVE*

Love is so important to life that its value cannot be overestimated. “All love,” Maharishi said, “in every phase of every drop of it, is significant to life.”<sup>9</sup>

Speaking of the growth of love in her life, one woman said, “Before meditation, I was considered a cold person. Now I feel as if there is a glowing warm fire in my heart which acts to make me warm and to make other people warm.”

This expansion of the ability to love is not a matter of pretense or mood making. In Maharishi’s view, love is a most innocent quality of life, the spontaneous expression of a full heart, and “lack of love denotes lack of life-content.” Because real love can only be innocent and spontaneous, “the show of love without genuine love is a shame to life.”<sup>10</sup>

A young woman at the University of California, Santa Barbara, recognized the truth of Maharishi’s words: “I find that everywhere I meet or run into people, I just naturally look for the ‘good’ in them. It’s a beautiful thing. Before, I used to pretend that I loved people; after all, it was the ‘happy’ thing to love everyone. But it was so insincere that looking back on it I’m ashamed of how hypocritical I was.”

Love helps us accept others just as they are. A 20-year-old woman said, “My younger brother has always been a sore spot with me because about a year after his birth, my older brother, my dearest companion, was killed. At the time, in my ignorance and grief, I couldn’t understand why my friend had been taken and this screaming child was kept. But meditation opened my heart and showed me the wonderful little being

that still must develop on this earth. For this one great awareness, I feel that meditation never has to give me anything else. I am truly thankful.”

*“The ego looks for what to criticize. But love looks upon the world peacefully and accepts. The ego searches for shortcomings and weaknesses. Love watches for any sign of strength. It sees how far each one has come, and not how far he has to go. How simple it is to love, and how exhausting it is to always find fault. For every time we see a fault, we think something needs to be done about it. Love knows that nothing is ever needed but more love.”<sup>11</sup>*

— GERALD G. JAMPOLSKY

Those who are limited in their ability to love, Maharishi taught,

Those whose love flows only in restricted channels of isolated objects or individuals, those who can like only this or that, those who have no awareness of universal consciousness in their hearts, are like small ponds where the love can flow only as ripples and not as waves of the sea.... To enjoy the ocean of love, we have to improve the magnitude of our hearts and gain the depth of an ocean, unfathomable and full.<sup>12</sup>

This melting and opening of the heart is one of the most wonderful results of Transcendental Meditation. It spills out into all our relationships and interactions, increasing our concern for others and both our desire and our ability to help create a better world. For example, a young man working as a Youth Corps counselor said that since beginning meditation, “I have become more and more integrated and have entered

the field of activity in an effort to live as full a life as possible and to do my part in the total responsibility of man.”

When I hear people say things like that, I feel inspired and hopeful for the future. Do we dare look forward to a world in which actions are motivated primarily by love and are performed by individuals who have fully developed their minds and their powers of perception and understanding?

When I look at the world around me—the actual living world, not the one reflected in the media—I see countless examples of love every day. Parents giving their all so that their children have food to eat, a place to live, a chance at education and a better life. Adults, already loaded with responsibility, taking on the care of their elderly parents. Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals who work long hours under tremendous pressure, offering care and comfort to those who need help. Teachers, underappreciated and underpaid, still showing up every day trying to help students learn. Or simply this: a mother helping her child put on a shirt, tie his shoes, or any of the thousand other unheralded acts of parenthood. “Love,” the saying goes, “is what makes the world go ’round.”

It seems that more and more people are devoting at least part of their time to actions for the good of the world. The peace movement, the environmental movement, continuing efforts toward effecting social justice, are all expressions of this love for life. People with open hearts tend to the well-being of their fellow human beings, as well as the natural world, with which we are in intimate relationship all the time. They are the perfect expression of Maharishi’s recommendation to “meet with warmth and meet to give.”







## CHAPTER NINE

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### EDUCATION FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

Maharishi was deeply interested in education throughout his 50-year career. He was, of course, an educator himself, bringing out knowledge that was profound and often diametrically opposed to prevailing understandings, knowledge that was both ancient and innovative. He was so interested in how the younger generations were being brought up, and how they could be *better* brought up to develop their full capacity for living happy, healthy, fulfilled lives, that he created model schools, colleges, and universities throughout the world.

Many of the hours I spent around him, when I had the privilege of being a member of his international staff, were in meetings in which he worked closely with educators for weeks at a time, bouncing ideas back and forth, explaining the principles he saw as fundamental to education, and helping to structure courses and entire curricula that could be used in any educational institution in the world.

In this chapter, after a very brief consideration of some of the problems in education today, I'll introduce you to three key aspects of his teachings as they pertain to education:

- The purpose of education and how it can be fulfilled
- The dynamics of gaining knowledge

- Maximizing the powers of the mind by cultivating the enormous capacity of the brain

Once we've explored the basic principles that underlie Maharishi's approach to education, you'll hear directly from students, teachers, and administrators and get a quick overview of some of the extraordinary benefits showing up in dozens of research studies. At the end, I'll introduce the schools and universities Maharishi founded, how they structure a unique educational experience, and the kind of results they produce.

### *DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES*

It was the great dream of 19th- and early-20th-century educators that universal free public education (K–12), and increasing numbers of students attending colleges and universities would mean an end to ignorance and hence to prejudice, hatred, greed, and other symptoms of narrow vision, and engender a more just society and a world at peace. That dream has faded and has often morphed into a nightmare, particularly in the United States, where thousands of public schools are struggling to educate young people despite sometimes overwhelmingly stressful conditions.

High stress is a problem not only at “inner-city” schools. There, the stress stems from a trauma-inducing environment of poverty and violence that most of us cannot even imagine. (Later in this chapter you'll hear from a principal at one of those schools.) Even many of the “best” schools “have become anxiety-ridden pressure cookers for kids,” as one concerned parent put it. “Kids are being pushed to achieve so much at such young ages, it's no wonder they're stressed.”

It's not solely an American problem, either. Around the world, students and educators face budget cutbacks, faculty layoffs, rising student fees, family pressure to succeed, and the increasing likelihood of unemployment even for top university graduates.

Stress among the young is more prevalent than many parents realize. A 2010 survey by the American Psychological Association (APA) of children 8 to 17 and their parents found that a high percentage of these kids have insomnia and stress headaches, and are troubled not only about their future, but about family tensions and finances. However, parents are largely unaware of how their children are feeling.

“Parents often underreport drug use, depression and sexual activity in their children,” an APA official commented. “Now it appears the same may be true for stress.”<sup>1</sup> College students may have it even worse. According to a 2010 report of the Higher Education Research Institute, “Stress is a major concern ... with college students [who are] arriving in college already overwhelmed and with lower reserves of emotional health.”<sup>2</sup>

When we think of stress in the schools, we tend to envision violence, dropouts, binge drinking, and other outward manifestations. But there's a deeper and more insidious problem. According to Fred Travis of the Center for Brain, Consciousness, and Cognition, stress interferes with the optimal functioning of the brain, in particular the prefrontal cortex, sometimes referred to as the CEO of the brain. “These CEO circuits are your greatest resource,” says Travis. “They underlie intuition and broad planning, and are the basis for

creative problem solving.” When these frontal circuits are impaired, he says, “we act with little planning or foresight.”

High stress switches the brain “from a problem-solving mode into a fight-flight mode.” Fatigue also causes the frontal circuits to shut down. If you’ve ever tried to learn something at night, you probably found that you read a page or a paragraph once, and then again, and again ... it doesn’t stick. Travis explained that it’s because “the frontal area that integrates new information with our current memories is off line.” Student life today is notorious for building up a sleep deficit as students struggle to keep up with assignments and study for exams—and, of course, stay up nights partying, playing computer games, or updating their Facebook pages. Add to fatigue and stress the impact of alcohol and drugs, which, Travis says, also “de-activate frontal control areas,” and you have to wonder what chance students have to learn much of anything.

William Stixrud is a clinical neuropsychologist on the faculty of George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Washington, D. C., who specializes in working with children and young adults. “Not only does stress interfere with functions such as attention, memory, organization, and integration,” he said, “but prolonged stress actually kills brain cells and shrinks the brain’s main memory structures.”

Dr. Stixrud said that he has long been an advocate of using the TM program in schools, not only because of its known ability to reduce stress, but because in the process of transcending, TM produces “high levels of coherence or orderliness in the functioning of the brain, which results in the

experience of increased peacefulness, harmony, mental clarity, and the ability to see things in perspective.” The experience of transcending enlivens what Travis and other researchers have called “total brain functioning,” opening communication and coordination between all parts of the brain, and bringing the resources and capabilities of the whole brain to bear on all of life’s circumstances and challenges.

These findings, which have emerged over the past 20 years or so, directly parallel major research around the world that has overturned the long-standing, orthodox stance of the scientific community that brain development essentially stops at about age 16. We now know that the human brain is a dynamic, constantly self-reorganizing organ capable of being reshaped and restructured throughout life. Our brains can continue to produce new neurons (brain cells) and to forge new connections (synapses) throughout our lives, into old age—and in fact, they do. We can keep learning, and change our ways of thinking and behaving, at any time in our lives!

### *THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION*

The key to what *education* can be is embedded in the word itself, which comes from the Latin root *educere*, “to bring or lead out.” It implies a bringing out and developing of an individual’s full capacity for living.

“Instruction is the process of pumping information into the person; it literally means ‘to build into’; whereas education means the process of nurturing or rearing,” wrote anthropologist and author Ashley Montagu in *The Direction of Human Development*. “We must recognize that today, in the western world, we have far too much instruction and all

too little education. We are far too busy filling up the young with what we think they ought to know, to have much time left over for helping them become what they ought to be.”<sup>3</sup> Or, in the words of the distinguished American educator Robert M. Hutchins, “The aim of [American] education in an age of rapid change should be to do what it can to help everybody gain complete possession of all their powers.... this is what we ought to have been doing all along.”<sup>4</sup>

*Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.*

— SOCRATES

In *Science of Being and Art of Living*, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi offered this definition:

The purpose of education is to culture the mind of a man so that he can accomplish all his aims in life. Education, to justify itself, should enable a man to use the full potential of his body, mind and spirit. It should also develop in him the ability to make the best use of his personality, surroundings, and circumstances so that he may accomplish the maximum in life for himself and for others.<sup>5</sup>

Considering how far we are from accomplishing these basic and sensible aims, and that “there are tremendous latent possibilities that are never unfolded by young people during their student life,”<sup>6</sup> we can see why there is such widespread dissatisfaction with education. Students are being asked to absorb and produce more, but as the demands on them increase, what is being offered to actually increase their abilities, to provide added intelligence, insight, or emotional stability? What is being done to help them discover and create

meaningful values and goals, and a direction in life? Shouldn't education encourage and support students to discover and become who they really are, and prepare them to confront and solve the problems and answer the questions that life poses?

As *New York Times* columnist David Brooks recently noted, “Modern society has created a giant apparatus for the cultivation of the hard skills,” such as rational, analytic thinking, but it has failed to help students develop their moral and emotional faculties. Children learn to “jump through a thousand scholastic hoops. Yet by far the most important decisions they will make are about whom to marry and whom to befriend, what to love and what to despise, and how to control impulses.” We do a good job of teaching technical skills, says Brooks, “but when it comes to the most important things, like character, we have almost nothing to say.”<sup>7</sup>

Broadly speaking, education has two main purposes or functions: the cultivation and development of the individual, and the improvement of society. Which of these two goals is most important? It is difficult to say, for they are mutually dependent. The better the individual person, the better society will be. What, after all, is a society, if not a group of individuals? And a better society will offer more opportunity for individual development. However, the very basis of a democratic society, that which distinguishes it from a collective or totalitarian system, is an insistence on the preeminence of the individual. A truly democratic society strives to create the proper conditions—political, economic, educational—for the full development of every person.

It is an ancient truth. “From the Emperor down to the mass of the people,” Confucius taught more than 2,000 years ago, “all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of all else.”<sup>8</sup> If society is to be improved, Robert Hutchins explained, it will happen “not by forcing a program of social reform down its throat, through the schools, or otherwise, but by the improvement of the individuals who compose it. As Plato said, ‘Governments reflect human nature. States are not made of stone or wood, but out of the characters of their citizens: these turn the scale and draw everything after them.’ The individual is the heart of society.”<sup>9</sup>

### *THE MISSING ELEMENT*

If the outer structure and expression of life is based on the inner state of consciousness, and we build our lives and our civilizations based on who we are inside, why is it that we have tended to turn outward, dealing always with structures and forms, handling problematic situations with whatever capabilities we have, instead of attempting to improve our capacity for effective, intelligent action? If it is so vital and crucial, why has inner development—the most fundamental aspect of education and the basis of all success and happiness in life—been so neglected?

The answer, stated bluntly, is: *There simply has been no truly effective way to raise the level of individual life.* Educational systems, wrote Dr. Michael Dillbeck and Dr. Susan Levin Dillbeck, “have organized formal schooling without complete knowledge of the creative potential of the individual or how to develop it.”<sup>10</sup> People are thus deprived of the satisfaction, as well as the competitive advantage, that they could enjoy from a more complete unfoldment of their capabilities, and



society is deprived of the greater contributions they might make.

“An educated person,” I once heard Maharishi say, “is expected to be proficient in every phase of his life. Yet time doesn’t allow all disciplines and aspects of life to be mastered.” The pace and style of living today necessitate specialization: no one can learn everything and be an expert in all fields of knowledge. Thus, people complete their basic education with only partial knowledge and partial competency. What is needed, he said, is “the knowledge to develop a fully integrated individual, whose mind, body, intellect, and behavior are in perfect accord with all the laws of nature.”

Einstein recognized this decades ago. “The school should always have as its aim,” he said, that the student “leave it as a harmonious personality, not as a specialist.... The development of general ability for independent thinking and judgment should always be placed foremost.”<sup>11</sup>

What has been missing from education, then, is an effective methodology to upgrade our capacity for creative and humane action. We have known no successful way to sharpen the mind and expand the ability of the heart to express love and human kindness, and to help men and women attain full use of their potential for dealing effectively with all situations of life. The solution to the problems confronting people in every nation on Earth lies in the same place as the source of the problems: those individuals who make up the society. If we do not experience a significant deepening and expansion of consciousness, the nature of the problems may change, but we will continue to create many more. From this perspective,

finding a way to unfold the inherent potential of every person is the greatest need of our age, and it is the legitimate province and fundamental function of education.

*“The thing in this world which is of most supreme importance, indeed the thing which is of most practical value to the race, is not, after all, useful discovery or invention, but that which lies far back of them, namely, the way men think.”<sup>12</sup>*

— **ROBERT A. MILLIKAN**, NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING AMERICAN PHYSICIST

### *THE THREE FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE*

Education is generally considered to be about *knowledge*: acquiring it and learning how to apply it. Although we rarely think about it this way, knowledge has three ever-present components:

- The knower or learner
- The known, the object or focus of attention, the thing to be learned
- The process of knowing that connects the knower with the known

Educators have focused almost entirely on only one of these: the object to be known. Students at every level of education, from kindergarten to postdoctoral studies, spend their time learning about all kinds of things: the alphabet, algebra, architecture, Elizabethan poetry, mitochondria, statistical

analysis, Beethoven's quartets, and so on. But how much time is allotted to learning about the self, the mind that learns and knows?

Objects of knowledge abound; every few years, the "knowledge explosion" doubles the amount of information available to us. But the mind, the *container* of information or knowledge, the subjective side of the equation, does not expand at an equivalent rate. For us not to be overwhelmed by the avalanche of information that falls on us every day, an increase in subjective development is imperative. The knower has to grow in capacity and capability.

Addressing the 1973 annual conference of the American Association for Higher Education, Maharishi challenged the large hall filled with educators by saying, "Education has been facing problems for decades, for centuries. It has not been satisfactory." But he did not dwell long on the problem. "What is lacking should be obvious to all," he said. "What the present system of education provides is knowledge of the object; what it misses is knowledge of the subject, the knower."

As Drs. Dillbeck and Dillbeck explain, "To Maharishi, 'knowledge of the knower' includes more than being aware of one's thoughts and feelings. It refers to the individual's direct subjective experience of the full range of his own consciousness, from the most active surface level of thought to the deepest inner silence of transcendental consciousness, the field of the total potential of the mind."<sup>13</sup>

The full range of our individual consciousness includes (1) the outermost level of the senses, which bring in information;

(2) the active, surface, thinking level of the mind that processes information from the senses and from experience of all kinds; (3) the more quiet or settled level of the intellect that is responsible for making distinctions and decisions; (4) feelings, which not only play a subtle but powerful role in decision making, but also catalyze creativity and add a dimension of richness to experience and relationships; (5) intuition, which is our way of directly knowing things that the senses cannot deliver and the mind and intellect might fail to grasp, but which are frequently the source of important personal and scientific discoveries; and (6) the ego or sense of self or identity that underlies all the other layers of the mind.

All these are enlivened and strengthened through the simple procedure of transcending, during which one consciously traverses the entire depth of the mind, fully awake and alert, like a diver fathoming the depths of a lake. Honing and refining these mental faculties strengthens both the knower, and the process of knowing or gaining knowledge, and results in a more clear and complete knowledge of the objects of knowledge.

Even deeper than the ego is consciousness itself. The ultimate foundation of all the levels of knowledge is the *consciousness of the knower*, so if the knower doesn't know himself or herself in the comprehensive way just described, then the whole structure of knowledge has no basis to it. And without a sharp, clear, and awake knower, the process of gaining knowledge is handicapped and knowledge is bound to be inadequate and incomplete.

Contemporary education doesn't yet recognize that knowledge is structured in consciousness—that the center and

home of all knowledge is the knower, one's own consciousness. But to base education solely or primarily on the accumulation of information is shortsighted. Education that doesn't help the student gain knowledge of the knower is baseless, and if it does not serve to develop the full capacity of the knower, it fails to do justice to the whole field of knowledge. Anything that we know via partially developed intellect, cloudy senses, untutored critical thinking skills, and an inability to assimilate facts into a broad context, limits the truthfulness and completeness of our knowledge. And yet, that is our current way of doing business in the educational field. Knowing the knower, and developing the full powers of the knower, is the only sensible basis for education.

*“Educators today are aware that students come to school in differing states of awareness, more sleepy and dull or more awake and alert. But they’ve never thought about students being able to develop higher states of consciousness, higher states of alertness and wakefulness, of receptivity and self-awareness, breadth of comprehension. All of these qualities, that make a great student, can be developed through consciousness-based education. Teachers know they can prepare their classes, bring in video tapes, take the students on field trips, but they don’t have anything that can make the students more creative, more intelligent, more receptive, more alert, and when that is put into the equation, then suddenly they realize the scope of Maharishi’s contribution to education.”<sup>14</sup>*

— **ASHLEY DEANS**, DIRECTOR, THE MAHARISHI SCHOOL, FAIRFIELD, IOWA

*“WHO SEES THE FLOWER?” OR,  
GETTING TO KNOW THE KNOWER*

It may seem strange or counterintuitive, at first, to suggest that the subjective aspect of knowledge and knowing is ordinarily beyond the range of our experience. But what exactly *is* the experience of someone who says, “I see a flower”? We cannot doubt that this person sees the flower—or rather, that the flower is being seen—but *who* sees the flower? Who is the “I”? Is it the eye, the retina of the eye, the optic nerve, some area of the brain—*who is the “I” that sees the flower?*

What we realize when we start looking carefully is that this “I” is very elusive. It is interesting that we can always locate the *object* of experience, but locating the subject is not so easy. We have no difficulty locating the flower that we see or smell, the music that we hear, or some stiffness that we feel in our neck—it is even easy to pinpoint our thoughts (*I am thinking about my friend George*)—but *who* is having all those experiences? We say, “I see,” “I do,” “I like,” and yet we don’t really know who that “I” is.

For many centuries we have heard the dictum “Know thyself,” but in general, we haven’t been able to do so. Knowing *about* the self is not the same as knowing and experiencing the self. We may know, “I like ice cream,” “I don’t like spinach;” “I can play the guitar, but I’m too shy to play in front of others.” This information still doesn’t locate the “I” who is at the basis of all experience and activity.

Maharishi locates the “I,” the Self, as the field of pure consciousness at the source of thought. The Self is universal,

the same for me as for you, the same for us as for anything and anybody in creation. Through the process of Transcendental Meditation, a person learns to systematically reduce an object of knowledge—the thought or mantra used in the practice—to increasingly more refined, abstract, or quiet impulses until it simply fades away, and the subject, the experiencer, the pure consciousness or Being, comes to full awareness. This constitutes a moment of self-realization, a self-referral or self-referential knowledge of the Self by the Self that, over time, can become permanent.

### *KNOWLEDGE IS STRUCTURED IN CONSCIOUSNESS*

“Knowledge,” Maharishi taught, “is structured in consciousness.” This concept from the *Rig Veda* means that consciousness is the basis of experience. Everything we know takes place in awareness: to have an experience means to be aware of something, to feel, to think, to perceive, to be conscious. So all knowledge, all knowing, happens in consciousness.

“Knowledge is structured in consciousness” also means that whatever knowledge we gain, by whatever means—direct sensory perception, intellectual analysis, inference—is always conditioned by our *state* of consciousness. The nature or quality of the knowledge—how true or complete it is—is conditioned by the quality or level of our consciousness.

Are you wide awake, or drowsy? Are you angry, or in love? Your experience will change as your mental, emotional, and physiological state changes. When you see a vase of yellow daffodils on the oak table in your living room, you are not seeing it in some pure, true, absolute way, but through the

medium of *your* sense of sight and *your* ability to perceive and appreciate. Artists, with their cultivated vision, would see subtle nuances of color, the play of light on forms, that most of us would overlook.

All of our knowledge is structured in our consciousness, and when consciousness changes, knowledge changes, too. The golden-yellow flowers we see with our waking-state perception may become giant suns floating through space in the dream state. To a child, a page filled with equations would be totally incomprehensible, perhaps a nice surface to draw on. To the same person, now a grown-up astrophysicist, the page might reveal the secrets of the universe.

Because it is structured in consciousness, knowledge is different in different states of consciousness. The nature of whatever knowledge we gain depends upon our ability to perceive, process, and understand. Thus the critical importance of increasing the ability of the knower

### *LIFE: ITS STRUCTURE AND CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE*

It is a fundamental principle of Vedic Science that underlying the myriad, ever-changing, ever-evolving forms and phenomena of life is an unbounded field of pure, abstract creative intelligence—the organizing power at the heart of life that gives rise to the ever-new face of manifest creation. Many have recognized and paid tribute to this impelling life force.

“The infinite expanse of the universe, its growth through immeasurable periods of time, the boundless range of its changes, and the rational order that pervades it all, seem to



demand an infinite intelligence behind its manifestation,” wrote David Starr Jordan, former president of Stanford University.<sup>15</sup> And Albert Einstein said, “The strongest and noblest driving force behind scientific research is a deep faith in the rationality of the structure of the world” and “a longing to understand even a small glimpse of the reason revealed in the world.”<sup>16</sup>

From cosmos to electron, from galaxy to the atom, order prevails. Every living thing develops and is structured according to an organizational plan, a norm, spelled out in its genetic code. A tremendously powerful ordering principle is at work, maintaining every life, spurring it to progress, integrating it as an individuality, and meshing it harmoniously into its surroundings.

This most basic aspect of life is what Maharishi called Creative Intelligence. “Order in nature,” he explained, “and man’s power of ordering show that intelligence is at the core of every physical existence and every human mind. The understanding of the nature of intelligence, therefore, can be the common ground of all knowledge.”<sup>17</sup> Einstein had a similar sense of the “nobility and marvelous order that are revealed in nature and the world of thought.”<sup>18</sup>

Maharishi, of course, not only described and defined this underlying intelligence, but he also suggested a way to access it directly, eventually incorporating it permanently within everyday experience to such a degree that “one can be fully at home in all fields of knowledge and activity.”

Why at home? Because all (objective) fields of knowledge, like all (subjective) knowers, are expressions of the same pure

consciousness or intelligence. To know ourselves truly in our deepest essence is to know the essence of all things. Solving problems, and memorizing facts, formulas, details, and dates will always be part of education. But if this long-missing knowledge of how to contact and permanently live in harmony with the primary intelligence of nature could also become an essential part of every student's education, future generations would enjoy increasingly happy, problem-free lives.

“Book knowledge,” Maharishi once commented, is not what educates a person. “Information gathering is one thing, but spontaneously making use of the total creativity of Natural Law is another thing.”

### *GAINING THE ADVANTAGE OF KNOWLEDGE*

Expertise, or at least a high degree of competence in specific fields of life and knowledge, is the promise of the various branches of learning. If our goals are modest or, some people would say, simply realistic, that is enough. But the ultimate direction of human desire is toward the infinite, toward complete fulfillment; that would seem to require effectiveness in *all* aspects of life, not just 1 or 2 or 20. On the level of the different branches, it isn't possible to gain that fulfillment. No person has the time or the capacity to assimilate and master the enormous amount of available knowledge and all the associated skills.

But maximum effectiveness in life *can* be gained by applying a well-known principle: Handle the causal level in order to have the most influence on the effect. Handle the molecular level to influence the cellular level. Nourish the root of the

tree and all the branches thrive. On the level of the branches and leaves, it's impossible to effectively care for the tree. But from the level of the root, it *is* possible.

We've seen that all fields and phases of life spring from one common source: Being, the Unified Field of all the laws and forces of nature, the underlying, as-yet-unexpressed ocean of Creative Intelligence and energy. This is the root of the tree of life, the ultimate cause of all the innumerable effects that constitute the endlessly diverse material world. If we can engage the domain of Being simply by opening up to it and bringing it within our conscious awareness—allowing the boundaries of our felt separateness to dissolve into the boundlessness of our essential being—then, automatically, without any further doing, it nourishes the various branches, strengthening all aspects of thought, speech, and action.

The primary purpose of acquiring knowledge is to use it, to gain some advantage from it. That our sun floods the earth with much more energy than is needed to maintain life is fascinating; utilizing more of it through technologies that quietly and safely capture it is practical and may prove crucial in solving humanity's energy requirements as populations grow and fossil fuel sources are depleted or—hopefully, soon!—phased out. That there exists a structure to life—an outer, limited surface value and an inner, unbounded source of energy and intelligence—is also fascinating. Individuals *tapping* that inner source can gain the advantage of it for the fulfillment of their own goals and desires, and the betterment of life for all.

We've spent quite a bit of time considering Maharishi's ideas about education. What happens when these ideas are put into practice?

### *RESULTS I: RESEARCH*

**Revolutionary New Knowledge about the Brain.** “For four hundred years ...,” wrote Norman Doidge, M.D., in *The Brain That Changes Itself*, “mainstream medicine and science believed that brain anatomy was fixed. The common wisdom was that after childhood the brain changed only when it began the long process of decline.”

This theory held that once brain cells were injured or died, they could never be replaced, “nor could the brain ever alter its structure and find a new way to function.” The tragic consequence of this viewpoint is that it perpetuated a limited, narrow, and ultimately disheartening view of human nature, because if the brain cannot change, then “human nature, which emerges from it, seemed necessarily fixed and unalterable as well.”<sup>19</sup>

Recent research has turned this gloomy perspective upside down. Scientists now have striking evidence that the brain is far more flexible and “teachable” than most psychologists, biologists, and neuroscientists ever imagined. We've all seen textbook illustrations showing specific areas of the brain and the fixed functions they're thought to perform—“This is the visual cortex, this is the auditory cortex,” and so on. This mechanistic model, which was summed up for more than 100 years in the phrase “one function, one location,” while not entirely wrong (some degree of territorial specialization is

certainly the norm), has given way to a much more fluid, flexible model.

For example, many people have long believed that when a person goes blind, to compensate for the loss of sight, their hearing becomes more acute. Scientists scoffed at this notion, but now that brain mapping, fMRI, and other means of scanning have opened a window into the brain, we've learned that blind people often *do* have twice as much real estate in their brains devoted to hearing and processing sound as people whose vision is normal. The area that is usually dedicated to vision is quickly converted to another use when the need arises. (There's a little more on this in the notes at the back.)<sup>20</sup>

In a few short years, from being perceived as a quasi-mechanical structure with fixed internal borders and unvarying functions, the brain is now seen as highly dynamic—constantly organizing and reorganizing, structuring and restructuring itself as it responds to internal and external experience. Everything we learn, every perception that we have, every action we perform, changes the brain. In the language of neuroscience, this is known as *neuroplasticity*, the capacity of the brain to “rewire” itself constantly throughout life, to create new connections and allow unused ones to fade as our experiences and activities change. A companion term is *neurogenesis*, the ability to generate new neurons. Research has shown that new neurons are created in the brain every day, even in people in their 70s.

The implications of this for growth and change, for human freedom, are enormous: what we are today, we don't have to be tomorrow. If the brain can restructure itself that quickly,

forming new pathways and connections, there's no longer any question that we can change our lives.

There's a saying: "Neurons that fire together, wire together." Every experience creates a cascade of electrical activity that moves through the brain and leaves a strengthened connection among groups of neurons. Repeated experiences—practicing a musical instrument, working on your tennis backhand, solving calculus problems or crossword puzzles, honing your speaking or listening skills, trying to sit in full lotus pose—produce stronger connections and reinforced pathways.

All day and every day, your brain is changing. That means that with every thought you think (especially if you think it over and over), and with every action you perform, you are creating yourself. That also means you have the chance to rethink, regroup, and restructure whenever you take the initiative to do so. Your brain is not "hardwired" like a computer or a car engine, and it's never a finished product. Rather, it's an astonishingly vibrant, living world of pulsing bioelectrical activity, a flowing river of electrical waves that is exquisitely alive and responsive to everything within you and in your environment.

Now what does all this have to do with Transcendental Meditation? This: *Transcending* is also an experience, and one that has been found to have enormous benefits for health, happiness, and achievement. It has its own "signature," a distinctive pattern of brain-wave activity. Repeating the procedure daily strengthens the pathways that produce the transcendent experience and all the good things that result from it.

During TM, the frontal areas become more coherent, more orderly. “Coherence,” explains Dr. Fred Travis, “means integrated functioning, that what one part of the brain is doing, another part of the brain is involved in; they are communicating back and forth. And because they are both involved in the same task, the electrical pattern, the electrical signature, is similar.” Coherence means that the brain is not operating as an uncoordinated collection of modules functioning independently, but rather, various areas such as the left and right hemispheres are acting together in harmony.

“What we’re finding,” says Travis, “is that the whole brain is beginning to communicate during TM practice.” The term he and his colleagues are using to describe this phenomenon is *total brain functioning*.

Commenting on the research, quantum physicist John Hagelin noted that ordinarily, if you monitor the electrical activity of the brain using an EEG, the brain-wave patterns appear to be quite disjointed and uncoordinated, “as if there is no communication between different aspects of the mind and personality.” He compared it to an orchestra tuning up before a concert. “The musicians are warming up, sawing away at their instruments; there’s no real effort to coordinate their activity, and there is a cacophony of discordant sound. And then the conductor assumes the podium, raises the baton, and that cacophony of discordant sound is transformed instantly into flowing music. The difference? The integrated functioning of the orchestra.”

This orderly brain functioning, Dr. Hagelin said, “what is called global EEG coherence, where the whole brain functions in concert, correlates to increased intelligence,

improved learning ability and academic performance, better short-term and long-term memory, enhanced moral reasoning, increased psychological stability, emotional maturity, alertness, and faster reaction time.”

On a YouTube video of Bonnie Erbé’s *To The Contrary* program (on Washington, D.C., public-television channel WETA), you can watch as longtime brain researcher Alarik Arenander monitors the brain waves of a research subject who’s practicing TM. “You can see that within just a few seconds, the impulses in the front of the brain and the back of the brain become more coordinated, and the front and the back get coordinated with each other,” says Dr. Arenander. “So after just a few minutes of sitting in meditation, you come out with a more orderly brain. That means that our thoughts, our feelings, our behavior are much more orderly and uplifted.”<sup>21</sup>

*“There is only one experience that makes use of the total brain physiology, and that is the abstract experience of unboundedness in Transcendental Consciousness—an experience that awakens the individual’s cosmic creative potential. Then the evolutionary power of total Natural Law will function in the person’s every thought, feeling, speech, and action for the spontaneous fulfillment of all desires.”*

— MAHARISHI

I’ve mentioned that Maharishi often spoke of enlightenment as a state in which the total potential of the brain is enlivened. Researchers, led by Dr. Travis, believe they have successfully correlated Maharishi’s reference to the “total brain” with the



coherence of brain functioning that shows up during Transcendental Meditation.

When I spoke with Travis about this in his office after a brief visit to the EEG lab, two factors stood out for me. First, the pattern of transcending is established within a few weeks of learning TM, and essentially it never changes. We are experts right away.

Travis told me:

Early in my research, I was puzzled about why people's brain-wave patterns during meditation were almost identical two or three weeks after learning TM to what they were six months or a year or even eight years later. Why should that be? I had done a lot of research on how experience changes the brain, and I knew that repeated experiences strengthen the connections between individual brain cells and form a kind of "channel." So if someone has been meditating for eight years, why wouldn't that have changed their brain so they'd be doing it better? It didn't make sense.

Then one day as I was walking home from my office, the thought came: *It's because TM is natural. If it's natural, you don't have to practice it, and you're not likely to get much better at it.*

This naturalness is exactly what Maharishi emphasized from the first days of his teaching activities more than half a century ago. We don't get better at it any more than we get better at breathing or metabolizing protein.

The second point that impressed me is about what *does* change. After some months or years of meditation (each person's experience is different), the awareness of pure consciousness doesn't just disappear when you open your eyes and stand up; some degree of it "sticks" to the mind and continues outside of meditation, so that, even when you resume ordinary thinking and action, you still feel some unbounded awareness. What Travis and others are discovering is that, as subjective experiences change, the brain is also changing: the patterns of brain integration that at first appeared exclusively during meditation begin to show up during activities of all kinds. The brain learns to operate from a platform of coherence, and corresponding to that, the mind finds itself stationed in a state of abiding calmness and centeredness.

In a study published in the *International Journal of Neuroscience* in 2006, Travis and colleagues measured the EEGs of incoming students at Maharishi University of Management while sitting with eyes closed (they did not yet know how to meditate) and while doing a complex computer task. The students then learned TM. When the EEG was measured again in two months, "the coherence or integration of the frontal lobes, the executive centers, reached a very high level during Transcendental Meditation practice," said Travis, "and it was the same at six months and again at twelve months."

They also measured brain activity during the same computer task, and found "each time we post-tested, there was increasing frontal coherence during the task. The brain patterns we had seen during Transcendental Meditation were beginning to be seen more and more in activity."<sup>22</sup>

Repeating a phrase that he clearly feels has central importance, Travis said, “Experience changes the brain. The experience of the transcendent produces a specific pattern of brain functioning. Alternating transcendental consciousness with activity integrates these two styles of brain functioning, leading to the experience of enlightenment—the permanent integration of transcendental consciousness with wakefulness, sleep, and dreaming.”

**Research on TM and Students.** The development of a new state of consciousness can be seen as the long-term goal of TM practice. Along the way, many practical benefits accrue from the reduction of stress and enlivenment of the brain. The few scientific studies I’ll review in the following pages are representative of dozens that have shown growth of learning ability, intelligence, memory, and other areas relevant to student life.

In an intelligence test using an assessment instrument called Raven’s Progressive Matrices, described by some experts as the best nonverbal measure of mental ability, high-school students who learned TM scored significantly higher on the test after just 14 weeks than another group of students who didn’t learn the practice. According to the organization that distributes the test, “Raven’s measures general mental ability and ... [the] capacity for analyzing and solving problems, abstract reasoning, and the ability to learn.”<sup>23</sup>

Another study of general intelligence paired 55 meditating university students with 45 nonmeditators. While the experimental (TM) group showed significant improvement in their scores over a two-year period, the controls did not. [Figure 9-1] The instrument used, the Cattell Culture Fair test,

aims to eliminate the bias of cultural factors such as language and acquired learning in order to measure intelligence itself.<sup>24</sup>

### DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLIGENCE: INCREASED IQ

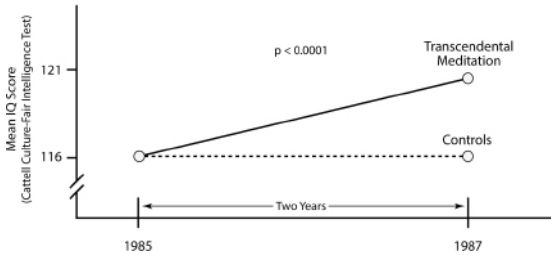


Figure 9-1

University students who learned TM improved significantly on a standard intelligence test, in contrast to a control group of nonmeditating students.

The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills have been used in many school districts throughout the U.S. since 1935 as a standard measuring instrument to test reading and math skills in children from kindergarten through eighth grade. In the study illustrated on the following page (Figure 9-2), published in the journal *Education*, elementary-school children with fairly low scores on the Iowa tests raised their scores considerably in both math and reading over a one-year period after receiving instruction in the TM technique.<sup>25</sup>

### PRIMARY-SCHOOL CHILDREN IMPROVE IN MATH AND READING

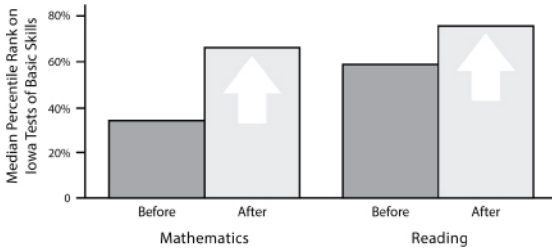
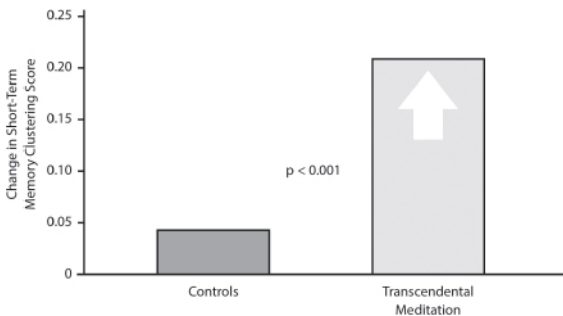


Figure 9-2

Within one school year, elementary-school students who learned and practiced the Transcendental Meditation program showed large and statistically significant gains on the Iowa tests, standardized tests of basic skills.

Numerous studies have shown substantial gains by TM meditators in learning ability and memory. The graph on the next page (Figure 9-3) shows improvement in short-term memory by a group of university students who learned TM, contrasted with other students who were randomly assigned as controls, and whose “practice” consisted of sitting with their eyes closed twice a day.<sup>26</sup>

### IMPROVED MEMORY



### Figure 9-3

After only 40 days, university students who learned TM showed improved short-term memory, in comparison with others who simply sat with their closed eyes twice daily.

Highly regarded and widely used, the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, according to *Newsweek* magazine, “has proven remarkably accurate in predicting creative accomplishments.”<sup>27</sup> It consists of two parts, one using partial drawings that the person taking the test is asked to complete, and one using words. In an early study (1979) by Dr. Fred Travis, published in the *Journal of Creative Behavior*, a group of TM meditators and nonmeditating controls were tested to determine a baseline, then retested five months later. On the post-test, the TM group scored significantly higher in figural originality and flexibility, and in verbal fluency.<sup>28</sup>

The next-to-last study I’ll discuss in this section was conducted in Taiwan by Kam-Tim So in collaboration with Dr. David Orme-Johnson. This randomized, controlled study, which was published in the journal *Intelligence*, measured seven different kinds of intelligence among 362 high-school students in three different schools, to see if regular TM practice over 6 to 12 months would improve their cognitive abilities. The students were assigned either to TM, to a contemplative form of meditation, or to taking a nap twice a day. The bottom line is that the nappers showed no improvement, and the TM group had growth that was significantly greater than the contemplative meditators in five of the seven variables.<sup>29</sup> [Figure 9-4]

## HOLISTIC IMPROVEMENT IN INTELLECTUAL PERFORMANCE

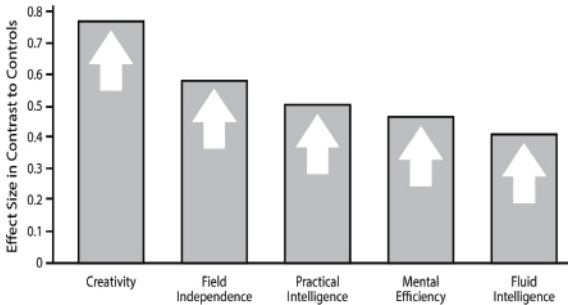


Figure 9-4

Three randomized controlled studies of students in Taiwan found that, in contrast to controls, those who learned Transcendental Meditation showed significant improvement in five measures of intellectual functioning.

The final study I want to tell you about was performed at American University (AU) in Washington, D.C., over the course of one semester, and published in the *International Journal of Psychophysiology*. In a collaboration between the psychology department at AU and the Center for Brain, Consciousness, and Cognition, 50 students were recruited for the research and half were randomly assigned to learn TM, while the other half acted as controls. All were tested at the beginning of the semester, and then ten weeks later, just a few days before final exams.

Compared to the first set of measures, the nonmeditating students ended up being more anxious, more worried, less able to focus their attention, and more sleepy and likely to

doze off. Travis, the lead investigator, noted that “sleepiness is one of the greatest enemies to learning. When you are sleepy, the frontal lobes go off line, and you can’t take in information.” On the other hand, the meditating students exhibited decreased anxiety, less worry and fatigue, and an increased ability to focus. And, as in previous experiments I’ve mentioned, their brain waves showed more widespread, coherent alpha during activity.<sup>30</sup>

Patricia Spurio, one of the students assigned to the TM group, carried a full credit load during the semester, had a part-time internship, and helped to organize a large rally on campus. “For me, the greatest benefit was being able to have these two 20-minute periods of meditation,” she said. “I could feel my whole body releasing the stress of the day. When done, I felt rested and ready for more activity. TM helped me get through it all in a more healthy and balanced way.”<sup>31</sup>

## *RESULTS II: WHAT THE STUDENTS SAID*

“I’ve been meditating since I was ten years old,” said Amine Kouider, a university student and documentary film maker from Algiers, Algeria. And he continued:

When I was in public school, the teachers were always amazed at how I always wanted to learn things. Going to school was a wonderful thing for me. I didn’t understand the other kids, who didn’t want to go to school, because I enjoyed learning. My friends were always saying—and they still do—“Amine, why are you so happy all the time? What’s wrong with you?” And I say, “I’m just happy.” I love life, and it’s because with TM, it’s what helps you enjoy life and love life. You explore your Self, your own Self, and you see how



great it is, and how peaceful it is, and how loving it is, and how warm it is, and you're at home. You're at home in your body, you're at home within yourself. And people feel that.

I've collected literally hundreds of similar testimonials from students. While each one has the flavor of the person's own experience, they all express similar themes: better grades, less anxiety, more concentration, greater enjoyment of learning and ease of self-expression, and often unexpected avenues of growth. Rather than bombard you with too many, I'll share just three more before moving on to some fascinating developments with entire schools and the people in them.

A young woman studying at the University of California, Berkeley, told me:

I've been in school two years while meditating. At the beginning I was average to mediocre. Every time I had a paper, I was miserable for about two weeks—it was an emotional trauma. This last quarter I had lots of papers to write, and they just flowed out of me with no trauma. I feel my intellect has grown with meditation. I'm more logical and can express myself more clearly. I got *A*'s this time, which I never got in college before.

When Dr. Fred Travis's teenage daughter, Dariana, was a student at the Maharishi School in Fairfield, Iowa, he asked her to sit and demonstrate meditation onstage in front of 450 people while he monitored her brain waves. She did it, and reported afterward:

I had the worst stage fright I ever had. Probably because it's not something you can fake. If you're really nervous giving a

speech, you can kind of fake it, but you can't fake it if you start meditating; it doesn't work! So I was sitting there onstage, and my heart rate was way up and my palms were sweating, and I was shaking a little bit. And then I was told to close my eyes and start TM. And it worked! Instantly! All of a sudden I was having deep experiences of the transcendent. And apparently the brain waves matched it.

Earl Sheperd is a retired fire captain from San Diego, California, who learned TM many years ago. He explained:

TM has strengthened me as a human being. Not just as a black man. It strengthened me as a black man. It strengthened me as an American. It strengthened all my values. I went from a dropout in high school to a math major and an honors student in junior college. I was so good in math they exempted me from taking tests, and instead I tutored people. I had barely gotten out of high school. And I had just started TM in my first semester of college. Within the first couple of months after I started TM, *everything* changed.

### *RESULTS III: CHANGING LIVES IN SCHOOLS AROUND THE WORLD*

Parents, teachers, and administrators who are exposed to the TM program—whether they practice it themselves or not—are markedly impressed by what the program does for students, as well as the school environment. Stress goes down, grades go up, happiness and satisfaction increase, and life gets better.

**Weaver High School, Hartford, Connecticut.** Ever since the TM program was introduced at Weaver High School a

few years ago, everyone has noticed the change. Said Paul Stringer, Weaver's principal, "I sense a feeling of peacefulness that TM brings to staff and students who have been trained. A peaceful resonance is flowing throughout the building."

When Mr. Stringer heard about TM, he thought, *I would be a fool not to introduce TM, at least have it come into the school to see if it could help our students. Because, Lord knows, they truly need some help.* He hasn't been disappointed. "With the students who have been trained, there are fewer disciplinary issues. There's this change in the kids who have taken the opportunity to look on the serious side of TM, to enhance their own inner selves." A former U.S. Marine who also learned the practice, Stringer said he thinks TM has helped him become "a more humane person. A person who is more relaxed. When I have the opportunity to sit back and meditate, when I come out of a meditation, I'm at peace. I'm at peace."

Assistant Principal Darryl Burke has also noticed big changes among the students. "Kids who had a lot of trouble remaining focused, remaining on task, concentrating on what has to be done, because of TM have been able to become more focused in class, and able to participate for the entire class period."

Ann Marie Doyle, a special education teacher at Weaver, said:

I had a student last year who was extremely volatile, very angry. After he learned TM, he would sometimes come into my room and say, "Miss, I need to meditate." I'd give him a quiet space to meditate—and he hasn't been suspended once since then.... Personally, what I've been able to do through

Transcendental Meditation is stay very calm. There's a peacefulness that I've found in me. And I have real compassion and understanding.

Kyle, a senior football star at Weaver, related this story:

On a game day, I had a tremendous headache. I wasn't focused. But then I meditated for about 15 minutes prior to leaving, and while on the bus I just felt refreshed. At the end of the game, the coach told me it was the best game I had ever played. He said, "I think you should play with a headache more often." I said to him, "I think I should just meditate more often." Since then, it helped me become All-State, All-Conference, and to lead my team to a 9-and-2 season.<sup>32</sup>

In research designed to study possible benefits of TM for African-American teenagers with high blood pressure, students were randomly assigned to either learn Transcendental Meditation or participate in a health-education control group. After four months, not only did the TM group have significant reductions in blood pressure, but the research revealed a side effect: decreased absenteeism, fewer rule infractions, and fewer suspension days.<sup>33</sup>

**Fundación Hogares Claret, Medellín, Colombia. In 1984,** Father Gabriel Mejia, a Catholic priest in Medellín, Colombia, opened a small sanctuary for abandoned, homeless, and orphaned children—a safe place where the children could go to escape the trauma of the streets and find a warm meal, a bath, and a place to sleep. A few years later, on a visit to the United States, Father Gabriel learned Transcendental Meditation. He immediately recognized its

potential to help the children in his care overcome the terrible stress they endured daily, and to have a better life.

Over the nearly three decades since he opened the doors to his first center, Father Gabriel has given refuge, help, and hope to nearly 50,000 children. His one center has expanded to 52, which care for about 3,500 children at a time. All the children have the opportunity to learn TM, the TM-Sidhi program, and yoga postures, and almost all of them do so. From his own experience and what he has seen with the children, Father Gabriel has become an enthusiastic advocate of Transcendental Meditation.

“When a child starts to practice yoga every day, morning and afternoon,” he says, “when a child closes the eyes and begins to meditate, they open themselves up to a field of infinite possibilities, as Maharishi says. The world opens up for the child. And then the child discovers their essential nature, which is love.

“The basic therapy,” Father Gabriel says with passion, “is love. Love is the royal medicine for any illness or disorder. When a child feels welcome, when they feel an educator is concerned about them—this child who came from being mistreated, from the violence and hostility of the streets—they change. The child changes.

“A child is not a problem. A child is an opportunity. A child has infinite potential. A child is like a shrine. A child is like a dance of creation.”

In addition to TM, yoga, and daily doses of love from Father Gabriel and his dedicated staff—some of whom were street

children themselves—the children also receive “the highest standards of traditional education,” and participate in planting and tending an organic garden that supplies much of their food.

“I think we’re all committed to transforming the world we’re living in,” said Father Gabriel. “We have to leave a better world than the one we found.” A man who deals daily with the devastating effects of poverty, the father believes that “the real crisis we are facing in the world is not economic, it is a crisis of values, of the loss of spirituality. Now, with this beautiful knowledge from Maharishi, we have the chance to change the world.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Fletcher-Johnson Educational Center, Washington, D.C.**

For 20 years, Dr. George Rutherford was the principal at the Fletcher-Johnson Educational Center in southeast Washington, D.C., with a student body of 1,450 in grades K–8. In 1994, he introduced the TM program to hundreds of students, faculty, and staff. This is his account of how it came about:

Fletcher-Johnson was in a highly stressed area, an area that had a lot of drugs and a lot of violence. Some of my students and former students were shot; some had been killed. More than one died in my arms. That brought tremendous stress to me not just because I knew these kids and cared about them, but because it was part of my job to see that the school was safe, a safe haven for them and for the staff.

I had tried every government program you can name. Nothing worked. Then some people came to my office and asked to talk to me about Transcendental Meditation. I didn’t know at

the time what that was, so I sent them downstairs to talk with my teachers.

Interest in the TM program was strong, so arrangements were made for all the teachers, plus the custodial staff and cafeteria workers, to learn TM if they wanted to.

We set up what we called “quiet time.” That was 8:50 to 9:10 in the morning. Everything was shut down; it was completely quiet in the building. We hadn’t trained the students yet, but the fighting stopped. And in the afternoon, from 3:10 to 3:30, we had quiet time again. I didn’t have to go out on Benning Road any longer to stop fights.

After the students learned meditation, we found that our attendance went up, our behavior problems went down, and our academic achievement went up. Our teachers felt better. This was the greatest thing that could have happened to our school.

Dr. Rutherford also learned TM himself. “Transcendental Meditation is the best thing I have ever done to help myself,” he said.

I have more energy. I am less stressful. I can think more clearly, and I believe I have become a better principal. My tolerance level is higher. I’m able to speak more clearly to youngsters, and understand the things that are affecting them. My health is outstanding. If I had not started Transcendental Meditation, I’d have left the school system or I’d be dead because of all the pressure. It has made me much stronger physically and much stronger mentally.

**San Francisco Unified School District.** Schools in San Francisco are starting to turn to TM in a big way. As I write this in November 2011, there are 2,000 students in three public schools who begin and end each day with “quiet time.” Most students practice Transcendental Meditation during the quiet time class periods. As in other schools, the handful of students who elect not to learn TM can read silently or just close their eyes and rest. More than 350 faculty members and administrators are also meditating. The research that’s emerging from this carefully monitored program, according to one of the sponsors, “is showing a dramatic reduction in suspensions, an increase in grades and academic performance, and dropout rates are down.”

Jan Link, who evaluates the effectiveness of programs used within the school district, said that the benefits she’s seen for all students, but particularly for kids with ADHD who are academically far behind, is extremely encouraging:

Students’ attendance is better, and we see that they don’t get suspended or sent out of classrooms, so there’s more “seat time” for learning. TM allows them to go inside and develop themselves. To bring this to school children is very exciting, because they in fact are our future. It’s a very profound program that I think can make a huge difference.<sup>35</sup>

Jim Dierke is the principal at Visitacion Valley Middle School in San Francisco, a school that was threatened with being closed down due to consistent problems with violence, coupled with poor academic performance. When he introduced the Transcendental Meditation program into the school, the transformation was so complete, in terms of greatly improved grade-point average, reduced school



violence, fewer suspensions, improved attendance, and increased graduation rates, that Dierke, who was awarded the National Middle School Principal of the Year Award for the most transformed school, has taken a lead role in aiming to have TM taught throughout the entire district.

Dierke said, “Our kids are coming to school. They’re more motivated, more confident, more focused, more successful—and more joyful. Our teacher turnover and absenteeism,” which before had been disturbingly high, “is almost zero.”

Summing up a “progress report” on developments at Visitacion Valley, Dierke said:

Six years ago, at our eighth-grade graduation, I spent most of my time breaking up fights. Last Thursday we had a marvelous, peaceful, uplifting graduation. One of our students who, in the sixth grade was one of the most troubled and disruptive students in the school, asked to perform a musical composition. At the end of the performance, he came up to me and gave me a hug. He thanked me, and told me he loved the school. This is symbolic of the transformation we have experienced at Visitacion Valley.<sup>36</sup>

**Daburiya High School, Israel.** Daburiya is an Arab Muslim town of 8,000 nestled against the western slope of Mt. Tabor in Israel. According to Abed Elsalam Masalcha, principal of the high school, a few years earlier the school was in danger of closing due to a high level of violence “that made it hard to teach in the school,” coupled with a low level of academic achievement. The troubled administrators heard of Transcendental Meditation, decided to experiment with it, and

almost overnight, this school became a stellar performer, receiving the national education award in both 2008 and 2009.

“We started with the teachers,” principal Masalcha said, “then with the students, and we started to see changes, internal changes in the behavior, discipline, and motivation of the students. Now, when all the school is meditating, we can feel the calm in the school, and the discipline. We don’t have to shout about every small thing, or fight with the students; there’s been a major change. The school is quiet, it’s a nice place to be in, and a nice place to learn in. You don’t just see this; you can feel it.

“We have found that in order to change the students’ behavior, we need to change something within the student. It’s not enough to make rules and try to make everyone follow them. That way, you don’t actually change their behavior at all. Through practicing Transcendental Meditation, the students started to really change.”

“I think,” a boy at the school said, “that if the entire world would meditate, then there would be more peace, less violence, better relationships between people, more friends, a beautiful world—just like that!”<sup>37</sup>

**Lowell Whiteman Primary School.** Many other administrators and faculty members have investigated the TM program and have introduced it into their schools. Nancy Spillane, head of Lowell Whiteman Primary School in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, saw a video segment on the *Today* show about the success of the Quiet Time/Transcendental Meditation program in Detroit.

“I thought if I didn’t look into it, I might be doing a disservice to our children,” Spillane noted. Her school incorporated the program by cutting back a few minutes of each class period. “Now the teachers wouldn’t want that time back,” she said. “Students’ concentration and attention increased and discipline issues decreased. In one year, all the teachers, as well as several board members and parents learned the Transcendental Meditation program.”

*MAHARISHI SCHOOLS AND  
UNIVERSITIES AROUND THE WORLD*

**Maharishi University of Management (MUM)** In the summer of 1971, the idea was proposed to Maharishi to found a university with a curriculum based on the unifying vision provided by his teachings about consciousness. He agreed, and within a year, a young faculty had been recruited and the structuring of the university and its unique curriculum was taking place. In one more year the courses were prepared, the catalog was written, and the first freshman classes were in session at a temporary campus in a rented apartment complex in Santa Barbara, California. The third year found the university (at first called Maharishi International University) established on its own 262-acre campus in Fairfield, Iowa, 50 miles west of the Mississippi River, in the green, gently rolling hills of the heartland of America.

Officials from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the oldest and largest accrediting organization in the United States, visited the campus during its first year in Iowa and recommended the new university for accreditation with phrases including the following:

- Faculty—“Exceptionally well trained.”
- Students—“Active and involved in their learning. Enthusiastic in their participation in the work of the university.”
- Atmosphere—“A pervasive sense of vitality and engagement.”
- Curriculum—“An attempt at a total and continuous educational experience which is remarkable in its scope and execution.”<sup>38</sup>

MUM is—and has been for 40 years—a small but vibrant institution, now accredited through the doctoral level, providing an unusually rich learning and growth experience to its students. It has a distinguished faculty, with scholars and researchers from top universities such as Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Oxford, Princeton, and the University of California, who regularly publish in scholarly journals and who have garnered many millions of dollars worth of grants for their research.

The students are a hugely diverse group from just about all of the 50 U.S. states as well as 130 countries, who represent nearly every religion, culture, and race on Earth. Walking through the campus and eating in the student dining hall on a recent visit, I thought that if the so-called “adults” from various nations could behave with the friendliness and open easiness that these students showed toward one another, it would be a different world.

And indeed, that is one of the aims of Maharishi's university—creating a better world, an enlightened world of abundance for all, sustainability, and peace. All the students meditate twice a day, and most do so together in one of the two golden domes in the center of campus. So as the students study in preparation for their own lives and careers, and as they grow in consciousness through their meditation, they also contribute daily to harmony and positivity in the world as a whole.

The university's latest adventure in learning and in service to society, in response to one of the most pressing needs of our times, is in sustainability: it was the first American university to offer a degree program in Sustainable Living. The program includes courses and internships in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, eco-architectural design, and other related areas. Many of the classes are offered in a completely self-sufficient building (it makes its own solar and wind energy and processes its own waste) that the students designed and built themselves. The Sustainable Living Program is partnering with a young local organization called One Hundred Trees, which aims to plant 100,000 trees in and around Fairfield by 2013. In their first six months, they planted apple, pear, peach, plum, cherry, walnut, and pecan trees and reached 45 percent of their first-year goal.<sup>39</sup>

MUM is also the first U.S. university to serve an all-organic vegetarian menu of freshly prepared and locally grown food from the campus gardens, greenhouses, and a local organic dairy called Radiance. A 450-acre, 80-cow, grass-based operation owned and operated by a TM meditator with a Ph.D. in soil science, Radiance Dairy produces organic butter,

yogurt, cheese, and milk and derives almost 100 percent of its power from solar, geothermal, and wind sources.

The organic vegetarian food and daily stress-busting meditation are only two facets of the healthy lifestyle at MUM. The university has a policy of no drugs, alcohol, or smoking on campus. Daily physical exercise includes the usual competitive intercollegiate sports, and yoga instruction is provided for everyone. Rather than becoming tired and stressed, students are given encouragement and support to emerge from their education healthier than when they entered.

The university is located in a fabulous little town of 10,000—about 2,000 are TM practitioners—which is home to a rather astonishing number of entrepreneurs, artists, techies, and successful businesses, both large and small. Quite a sophisticated crowd, they easily support an unheard-of number of ethnic restaurants for an Iowa town (Indian, Thai, and so on), along with the usual pizza and steak places; town PR boasts that it has more restaurants per capita than San Francisco.

A local e-mail newsletter announcing Fairfield events lists concerts, plays, art exhibits, visiting lecturers, workshops—as much cultural activity as in a university town ten times the size. The Fairfield Arts & Convention Center and the Stephen Sondheim Center for the Performing Arts are never dark for long. Among many other accolades Fairfield has received, in 2003 the town was named “the most entrepreneurial community in America under 10,000” by the National Association of Small Communities.

A new 16-mile nature trail circles the city. And for anyone who might believe that TM is in any way a threat to traditional religion, the town of Fairfield has the largest synagogue in Iowa (measured by the number of congregants) and the largest Liberal Catholic church in the country. The local Roman Catholic Church is regularly filled with a mix of people from the TM community and the town. Other churches are equally lively.

At a celebration marking the university's 40th anniversary in the autumn of 2011, former U.S. Representative Jim Leach, a 30-year Congressman from MUM's district in Iowa, sent the following congratulatory message to the university community:

As a member of Congress, I was privileged to represent Maharishi University of Management for over half of its existence. I watched with great pleasure as its reputation grew and as the city of Fairfield became increasingly dynamic, diverse and successful, infused with people connected to the university's programs. I have always been impressed with the thoughtfulness and dedication of people associated with the university, and was honored to be the commencement speaker some 25 years ago. MUM has carved out a unique niche in American education that offers students a caring window into learning. I salute the university on its 40th anniversary and look forward to seeing what this innovative institution will accomplish in the years to come.<sup>40</sup>

**Maharishi School.** Shortly after Maharishi University moved to its permanent home in Iowa in 1974, a community of meditators began to take shape around it. The people who arrived to live and work in Fairfield, mostly in their mid-20s

to late 30s, decided that they'd like to have a school of their own for their children. The Maharishi School was founded and given a place on the university campus where it still operates today, though it's now housed in a beautiful new building filled with sunlight and permeated with silence from the daily group meditations joined by all the students.

It is a remarkable institution with a formidable record of achievement, especially as it has open enrollment: there are no entrance exams or aptitude tests (and it offers abundant scholarships), so just about anyone who applies gets in. Thus, it does not choose only the "best and the brightest," and it operates with an annual budget that would hardly buy lunch at some venerable and prestigious schools, yet it compares favorably with those elite schools in terms of academic achievement, sports, creativity, and the holistic growth it offers its students.

A few examples: No matter how students perform on standardized tests when they begin at the Maharishi School, by grades 10 to 12, virtually all of them score in the top one percent (99th percentile) in the nation on the Iowa Tests of Educational Development. The school has graduated over ten times the national average of National Merit Scholarship finalists. More than 95 percent of graduating seniors are accepted into four-year colleges. In two international creative problem-solving competitions, Odyssey of the Mind and Destination ImagiNation, Maharishi School students have won more state championships than any other school in Iowa history (41), and more world top-ten finishes than any other school in the entire world.



According to longtime school director Ashley Deans (an atypical K–12 administrator who holds a Ph.D. in quantum physics):

They've won the American high school mathematics exam four years in a row, they've won the state science fair ten times, they've won the state history fair five times, they've won the state photography competition and the state speech and drama competition more than any other school in the history of the state. And—they do it without stress. They've also won ten state tennis championships and the state golf championship.

Speaking at an education conference a few years ago at the Harvard Club on the campus of Harvard University, Donielle Freeberg, at the time a senior at Maharishi School, captain of the volleyball and cheerleading teams as well as co-valedictorian with her twin sister, Amelia, told the assembled educators:

The most important benefit that Transcendental Meditation has given me is happiness. When I meditate, I feel a deep sense of peace, happiness, and contentment within myself. Every day this inner happiness grows bigger and bigger, and I fall more in love with life. My life is infused with this inner happiness, and every aspect of it brings me fulfillment.

As word of its benefits for students reaches educators around the world, TM is being introduced into ever more schools, colleges, and universities. In addition, a growing number of dedicated institutions are springing up centered on the consciousness-based approach discussed in this chapter, with

the goal of unfolding the full potential of their students. I have space to introduce you to only a few.

In the United Kingdom, the Maharishi School in Skelmersdale, Lancashire, is an award-winning institution in a beautiful setting that has just recently (2011) been granted government support to make it entirely free to students.<sup>41</sup> This is well deserved: The school has consistently ranked first of all 4,400 secondary schools in Lancashire County, and is among the top schools in the U.K. In addition to many other prizes and honors, the school's students have won 21 "Poet of the Week" prizes (awarded by *The Times*); only one other school in Great Britain has won more than twice.

In China, in addition to courses in TM for students and faculty offered in various universities across the country, a branch of MUM has recently begun operating in Beijing.

In India, the 150 Maharishi Vidya Mandir schools form the largest network of private educational institutions in the country. About 80,000 students are currently enrolled in 16 states and 120 cities throughout India, from Kerala in the south to Jammu and Kashmir in the north. The schools offer the standard secondary-education curriculum, but their specialty is the unfoldment of consciousness through TM and the other modalities of Maharishi's Vedic Science.

In Mbale, Uganda, the Maharishi Secondary School for Girls is still small, but it has doubled in size each year since it was founded. "I've taught in all types of schools," noted Kalyebbi Felistus, the headmistress of the school. "These girls are disciplined and they're eager to learn." Geography teacher Nadunga Rebecca said, "In the school where I used to teach,

the students would give me a hard time, and I was thinking of getting another occupation. But now, teaching ... I will never leave it.”<sup>42</sup>

During my visits to the Maharishi School and MUM, I’ve felt much the same thing that inspired film director David Lynch to form a foundation to support TM instruction for students around the world. It’s the same thing, I believe, that motivates the dedicated teachers and administrators of the Maharishi schools in every country: the joy of the students. On a visit to Fairfield, Lynch was invited to attend a one-act play performed by the students. He thought he was in for a long night. However, to his surprise and delight, he found the acting wonderfully fresh and the children full of a type of joy and excitement he’d never encountered. *If this is the effect of consciousness-based education, he thought, why should it not be available to everyone?*<sup>43</sup>





## CHAPTER TEN

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### THE ART OF ACTION

#### *“YOGA IS SKILL IN ACTION”*

The key to ultimate success in any enterprise is encapsulated in several key verses in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “Established in Yoga, perform action,” for “Yoga is skill in action.”<sup>1</sup> In [Chapter 4](#), I mentioned that the word *yoga* means “union,” the union of the outer, ever-changing nature of the mind, always in search of greater happiness or satisfaction, with inner Being, the unbounded field of pure Creative Intelligence.

*Established* in Yoga means that through repeatedly experiencing this field of dynamic silence, the brain has structured a new set of connections that produce high levels of coherence; the state of union has become permanent, and the mind is unfailingly attuned to that inner richness, never out of touch with its own essential nature.

Why is this called “skill in action”? Maharishi likened the practice of TM to pulling an arrow back on a bow—a process that, with a minimum expenditure of energy, sends the arrow flying forward with maximum accuracy and force. TM, by bringing the mind to the state of restful alertness, allows the individual to live life most efficiently and skillfully, utilizing maximum potential. Meditators find that they can do less, expend less energy, and yet accomplish more. This is

reminiscent of the well-known business maxim: “Work smarter, not harder.”

Speaking at the Harvard Law School Forum in 1970, Maharishi emphasized this principle to the large audience. Here is the transcript of part of his talk:

The philosophy of action demands a skill in doing, so that we do less and accomplish more. Pull the arrow back six inches, and it will fly two furlongs ahead. It’s the technique of action. And if somebody says, “I didn’t have time to pull the arrow back?” it just falls flat, dead. Or someone going to the market says, “I didn’t get time to go to the bank?” He can only suffer in the market! The technique of going to the market is, five minutes in the bank, full day in the market will be fine!

And if someone says, “I didn’t get time to meditate?” If we don’t make the mind full of great energy, intelligence, and happiness by bringing it to the source of thought, the field of Being, then the mind can only be miserable when acting in the outside, it will be loose and weak. And being weak, one will strain oneself, do more and accomplish less, get tired by the evening. So the technique of action demands pulling the arrow of the mind back to the source, and then bringing it out for all accomplishment, whatever we want to accomplish. Do less and accomplish more.<sup>2</sup>

As the arrow flies forward, gravity and friction from the air gradually reduce its momentum, just as you may become tired or meet obstacles in your environment that drain your energies. Being *established* in Yoga means that you never lose access to that vast storehouse of intelligence and dynamism at the level of the Unified Field.

*“Most afternoons, I do 20 minutes of Transcendental Meditation, which I learned more than 25 years ago. For me, it’s a practice that not only burns off stress but gives me fresh eyes to clarify what’s really going on and what really matters.”<sup>3</sup>*

— **RICK GOINGS**, CHAIRMAN AND CEO, TUPPERWARE BRANDS

By training the attention to systematically and repeatedly traverse the whole range of the mind, from gross to subtle to transcendent and back again, TM enlarges the conscious capacity of the mind, producing broadened awareness, greater creativity, and clearer, more powerful thought. At the same time, the deep rest and relaxation afforded by the practice are refreshing and rejuvenating. With increased energy yet greater calm, any activity becomes more dynamic and effective.

Byron Nelson, an entrepreneur and investor in Idaho, told me:

TM is a priority for me. Most people like to get a return on their investment of time, and there is no better one than transcending. With transcending, when you come out into activity, you’re more dynamic, your thinking is more orderly, you’re more efficient, you can get more accomplished. So you have a great return on your investment of time.

Paul, a public-interest attorney whose work in Washington, D.C., has resulted in humane legislation and the allocation of many millions of dollars to help the nation’s poor, said:

I meditate before I go to court mainly because I find that I am very intensely thinking about what I'm going to talk about, and TM is a way of putting my mind at ease and being more relaxed. The courtroom is a very intense situation. TM helps me collect my thoughts and walk in much calmer. I normally didn't get nervous once the argument had begun, but I used to be fairly nervous at the beginning—*What is the judge going to be like? Is he going to be sympathetic or not? What is it that I have to say, how can I convince the judge?*—all these questions would fill my mind. I find that TM very much helps me to be relaxed when I go into the courtroom. Many of my colleagues have commented that I seem much calmer than other lawyers.

*“I GET A LOT DONE THESE DAYS”*

In his introductory lectures on TM, Jerry Jarvis, the former director of the International Meditation Society, often used to say, “Transcendental Meditation brings fulfillment to an individual in his own terms,” emphasizing that growth through TM is an individual affair, not proceeding according to any set mold, and that whatever your chosen direction in life, TM can be a help and a support. As you'll see from the following examples, meditators from a wide array of professions and backgrounds are finding this to be an accurate assessment.

CNN chief political correspondent Candy Crowley, whose work I've admired for many years, recently learned TM. With a job that demands seven days a week of interviewing, travel, writing for deadlines, and then broadcasting, she's had to discipline herself to carve out 20 minutes in the early morning (her days generally get started at 5:30) and after work to sit



still and meditate. But she does it. “If you make time for meditating,” she says, “the rest of your life is just, well, better. My thinking is sharper, more ordered, and my decisions come more easily. So I’m more effective during the rest of my day. And I’m better at managing my time.”

In an interview in *Yoga Journal*, Crowley said that she’d like to see everyone meditating and enjoying the benefits she’s gained from TM, especially women who are “juggling busy careers and families.” Her advice: “Just try to find the time to meditate. When you are working or have kids, it’s easy to say, ‘I don’t have time for me.’ We women need to give ourselves permission to take care of ourselves.”<sup>4</sup>

Actor Hugh Jackman said that he’s been “practicing Transcendental Meditation since I was 20 years old, and it changed my life. It has allowed me to deal with success, which can go to your head in this business. When I meditate, my energy is positive, I feel closer to people. I am more free.”<sup>5</sup>

Until his retirement in 2009, Ramani Ayer was the longtime CEO and chairman of the Hartford Financial Services Group, a Fortune 100 company and one of America’s largest investment and insurance firms. With revenues exceeding \$25 billion and international operations throughout the world, the Hartford is a massive organization.

Ayer remarked:

I have been practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique for 35 years. It has been ideally suited to my hectic life and has helped me to consistently raise my performance

levels. Practicing TM has demonstrably reduced my stress and helped to maintain my good health, and has immeasurably benefited my family and business relationships. Importantly, it has helped me to make clearer, more effective decisions on the job—and has reinforced my integrity in my dealings with all my stakeholders. I believe very strongly that the practice of TM has helped me to maintain a steady state of mind—it has given me equanimity no matter what happens.

#### CHESS GRANDMASTER RECOMMENDS TM

*“I learned Transcendental Meditation in 1998, while a student at Oxford University, six months before my final exams ... and was struck by how easy it was to practise the technique. I suddenly had more energy, concentrated better and felt warmer towards other people. Shortly afterwards, I earned a first-class degree, which had not previously been on the cards. In fact, TM was by far the best thing I learned at Oxford.*

*“I am now a professional chess player, the current British champion, and wouldn’t dream of playing a serious game without meditating beforehand. After meditating I feel calm, centred and ready to compete.”<sup>6</sup>*

— **JONATHAN ROWSON** WAS BRITISH CHESS CHAMPION FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS. HE EARNED HIS PH.D. IN THE STUDY OF WISDOM, AND CURRENTLY LEADS THE SOCIAL BRAIN PROJECT AT BRITAIN’S ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS.

The son of a Long Island jazz musician, Ray Dalio started an investment company, Bridgewater Associates, in his

two-bedroom New York apartment in 1975, around the time he learned the Transcendental Meditation technique. As president and chief investment officer of the company, Dalio has been stupendously successful; he now (late 2011) manages about \$125 billion in assets, Bridgewater has 1,200 employees, and its Pure Alpha Fund is the largest in the world.

Dalio recalled:

I was about 20, the Beatles were meditating, and I heard about it. I went to the TM center in New York and I learned it. School became very easy for me; it hadn't been easy before. Like a lens—I was looking at life and the world through this lens, and suddenly I cleaned the lens and everything became clearer and simpler and just easier. I also became calmer. I started to deal with the world like a martial-arts expert, in the sense that I could flow with things, understand things better, and react to them better and with more control. That carried through from school to my job and to my business.

I think if you just viewed it as stress relief, that would be fantastic, well worth it, but the stress relief benefit is probably only 10 to 20 percent of the total package. It is creativity, it's insight, it's centeredness, and then the things which those qualities bring, better relationships, better success, and more. *Not* just the relieving of stress. I think it is the single most important reason for whatever success I've had.<sup>7</sup>

TM is not just for executives and public figures. Whoever you are, whatever your goals, it can support your efforts. "I have gone from a period of three years of unemployment to having

established my own business,” a young man said. “I’ve overcome a great deal of my Gemini procrastination. I get a lot done these days.”

A musician wrote in response to my original questionnaire about TM’s benefits:

In playing the piano, I’m much more precise, more able to work out little subtle things for a long period of time and enjoy it. Meditation has tremendously improved my “ear,” my ability to accurately hear and play notes. In fact, my success in my occupation (writer-musician-singer) is a mindblower. I’ve had to employ others to keep up with certain phases of it ... attorney, producer, manager, etc. I have found more ease in completing started projects. “Work” has become a joy.

David Sands, a pediatrician from Des Moines, Iowa, is one of several thousand American physicians who have learned TM. He explained its benefits for his work:

Stress in medical practice is inevitable. It’s essential that doctors be able to have a mechanism to get rid of that stress. Personally, I found that the practice of Transcendental Meditation ... was a natural antidote to the stress of taking care of a lot of sick children and babies, a lot of life and death situations, having to literally save lives. It requires that one be very focused and very cool at any hour of the day or night. I’ve had a lot of emergency calls in the middle of the night; I had to go from being asleep, or being exhausted, to being fully able to function, in a matter of minutes. TM was just the natural way of getting myself a clear mind and a steady focus so that I could do the right thing, and actually be very successful, in taking care of the children.

## TWO TOP ENTERTAINERS TALK ABOUT TM

*“My twice-daily, 20-minute meditations are like taking welcome mini-vacations. When I finish TM, I’m recharged and ready to take on my day. On a film or TV set, or in rehearsal for a play, meditating after lunch helps me get through the rest of what’s usually an incredibly high-pressure work day. A persistent myth about artists is that we need to exhaust ourselves or lead wildly disordered lives in order to be creative. In reality, to succeed over a lifetime in the stressful entertainment world, we need tools to keep us rested so we can work at the high level expected of us, under usually grueling schedules.”<sup>8</sup>*

— **STEPHEN COLLINS**, ACTOR, AUTHOR, AND STAR OF 7TH HEAVEN, THE LONGEST-RUNNING FAMILY DRAMA IN U.S. TELEVISION HISTORY, WHO HAS PRACTICED TM SINCE 1976.

*“I first learned TM in Paris in December 1967, along with the rest of the Beach Boys. Maharishi taught us. The first impression I got was that it’s so simple, anybody can learn it. And if only everyone could learn it, the whole world would be different, just in terms of relaxation alone. The beautiful thing is that it’s not just a relaxation technique, it’s mind expanding, it gives you more mental energy, more physical endurance. It gives you the wherewithal to not only compete in life’s arena, but to excel, to win. I’m very competitive, and if there’s one thing you need to survive in a rock group for all these years it’s the ability to dissolve stress and tension, and to have energy and creativity.”<sup>9</sup>*

— **MIKE LOVE**, SINGER-SONGWRITER, FOUNDER OF THE BEACH BOYS, AND MEMBER OF THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

*THE STEADY INTELLECT: CONCENTRATION,  
CONTENTMENT, CLARITY*

One aspect of personal development frequently mentioned by meditators is stronger concentration. This improvement in the ability to focus attention is vital for success in any area. Ordinarily our minds wander; much time and energy is lost in random and irrelevant thoughts, or the mind is strained by efforts to force it to concentrate. But as we've seen, the mind is restless because it's constantly searching for greater happiness.

As a result of meditation, the mind's incessant quest for greater satisfaction becomes increasingly fulfilled. You take a "time-out" from action and interaction, sit comfortably, close your eyes, and begin your TM practice. Very quickly—often within seconds, according to the research—mental activity quiets down, brain waves synchronize, breathing slows and softens, and you settle, at first just for a moment but eventually for longer, into a peaceful silence. After your 20-minute absorption in what Maharishi called "self-referral awareness" (you are aware of being aware), the state of pure Being that is described in the Vedic literature as a field of bliss consciousness or *ananda*, the mind returns to everyday awareness infused with happiness. This inner contentment provides a stable basis for any and all activity.

"Once the mind becomes rooted in bliss-consciousness," Maharishi wrote, "eternal contentment becomes its very

nature and it remains steady, even when it is associated with outer experiences and activity.”<sup>10</sup> In the Bhagavad Gita, this is called the state of *steady intellect*. Just as someone who has great wealth is unperturbed by the rise and fall of the market,

so the mind which has gained the state of bliss-consciousness through Transcendental Meditation remains naturally contented [in] the field of activity. This contentment, being grounded in the very nature of the mind, does not allow the mind to waver and be affected in pleasure and pain, nor allow it to become affected by attachment or fear. This natural equanimity of the mind, even while it is actively engaged, is the state of steady intellect.<sup>11</sup>

Russell Simmons, entrepreneur and philanthropist, cofounder of Def Jam Recordings, creator of the clothing fashion line Phat Farm, and named one of the Top 25 Most Influential People of the Past 25 Years by *USA Today*,<sup>12</sup> has become a strong advocate of the TM program. “Transcendental Meditation promotes stillness,” says Simmons, “and when you are still is the only time you can think, the only time you can focus. When you have distractions and noise in your mind, you can’t comprehend properly and you can’t do your job. Comprehension comes from stillness, focus comes from stillness, and TM is the practice of touching that stillness for a few minutes twice a day.”<sup>13</sup>

Bob Jones, chief investment officer at one of the world’s oldest and largest investment banks, has been practicing TM since he was a 15-year-old high-school student. He related:

I was a *B* student going nowhere, very much lost in the world, and I think meditation helped me focus. In fact, I would

attribute a lot of my success in life to meditation and the ability to find my center—who I am, who I want to be.

It's very important to think clearly, especially under pressure and stress. People get upset and flustered and anxious when times are tough, and they make bad decisions when they do that. Having a calm demeanor, being able to take things as they come and being able to address them in a calm and thoughtful way is very important to success in almost any industry.<sup>14</sup>

TM also seems to help people prioritize. As Jones commented, everyone has a lot going on, but:

not all those things are that important. Transcendental Meditation gives you the clarity of mind to realize: “These are the things I need to do, and these are the things that are less important that I will get to if I have time.” By being more thoughtful and focused, you end up with more time than you would without meditation.<sup>15</sup>

### *TM IN BUSINESS*

Ongoing research since the 1970s has shown that TM is a powerful tool to enhance performance effectiveness. We have already looked at improvements in academic performance that have been measured; let's take a brief look at the benefits found in business settings.

**Improved Job Performance.** In a number of studies in the U.S., Europe, and Japan, employees who learn TM have been found to perform better at their jobs. The initial research was conducted by David Frew, a university professor and



management expert. In a couple of studies, the first with 100 and the second with 500 people, Frew found that, compared with control groups of nonmeditators, TM practitioners became more satisfied at work, their efficiency and output increased, they got along better with both co-workers and supervisors, and they were less likely to quit in order to change jobs. These findings were more pronounced for individuals in higher-level positions than for lower-level employees. Interestingly, Frew noted that although their supervisors believed that their desire to climb the corporate ladder had increased, the meditators themselves stated that they felt less inclined to jockey for promotions. In other words, Frew conjectured, TM practice may increase the kind of behavior and performance that leads to promotion, but relieves the anxiety about it.<sup>16</sup>

### IMPROVED PERFORMANCE AND SATISFACTION AT WORK

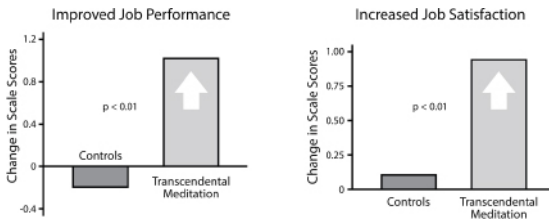


Figure 10-1

Employees at all levels who learned the Transcendental Meditation technique showed improved job performance and increased job satisfaction in comparison to control subjects.

**Stress Reduction and Organizational Health.** According to the American Institute of Stress, the annual cost of stress to U.S. businesses runs to about \$300 billion, or \$7,500 per employee. These dollars drain out for a variety of reasons, including compensation claims, reduced productivity, absenteeism, health-insurance costs, direct medical expenses, and employee turnover.

The problem, of course, is worldwide and is not getting any better as economies struggle and stress levels rise. In England, the British government's Health and Safety Executive calculates that work-related stress is the most significant occupational cause of working days lost annually in England due to injury or ill health; these lost workdays cost the British people almost £4 billion a year.

Rick Gault, executive vice president of the U.S. consulting firm Executive Management Associates, Inc. (EMA) summed up the problem: "There's an alarming growth rate of stress in business today. Business people desperately need a way to avoid having stress impede their effectiveness. I think that people increasingly need a tool like TM to keep their business going and growing. It's a matter of survival."

Nancy Slomowitz, founder and CEO of EMA, implemented a company-wide program to teach TM to any interested employees. Stress levels among the consultants and staff had been escalating, and, according to Slomowitz, their "inability to deal with the stress had resulted in co-workers getting too emotional and snapping at each other. Turnover became a problem and our reputation began to suffer." She had built EMA from a \$50,000 to a \$6 million company as consultants in financial management, training, information technology,

and strategic planning to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Department of Homeland Security, and other government agencies as well as nonprofits. It was still growing and profitable, but the quality of life was declining, and that was unacceptable.

Both Slomowitz and Gault had been practicing the TM technique for many years, and felt profound benefits. “So I thought, what I need to do is introduce it as a benefit for my employees,” Slomowitz explained, “because the more people I have in the company who meditate, the better it’s going to be for everybody. I thought maybe one or two people would sign up, and everyone else would think it was weird and be turned off, but it was the exact opposite.”

More than a third of her staff learned TM. “Now,” she says, “everyone gets along well, employee retention and satisfaction improved drastically, and our clients and associates look at us and can tell that we are a team.” An additional benefit is that the cost of health care for EMA went down because of a reduction in claims.<sup>17</sup>

In the early 1990s, Harvard researcher Charles N. Alexander and five colleagues examined stress, health, and employee development in two settings in the automobile industry: a large manufacturing plant of a Fortune 100 corporation, and a small sales distribution company. Employees in both venues who learned Transcendental Meditation reported greater satisfaction in both life and work. Over the duration of the study, they showed greater improvement than a control group in a wide variety of measures, including greater relaxation and autonomic stability and decreased anxiety, job tension,

insomnia, and fatigue. They cut down on both cigarettes and hard liquor, and their overall health improved.<sup>18</sup>

Similar benefits were found in a five-month study conducted by researchers at Japan's National Institute of Industrial Health. About 800 industrial workers instructed in the Transcendental Meditation program showed increased emotional stability, reduced anxiety, decreased impulsiveness and neurotic tendencies, and had fewer health complaints. By the end of the study, as in the one cited above, they were sleeping better and had cut down on smoking. Depression was also reduced in the TM group. Overall, the employees practicing TM improved significantly on 10 of the 14 measures of mental health the researchers were looking at.<sup>19</sup>

These studies suggest the great potential benefit, both for companies of all sizes and their employees, of making the TM program available throughout an organization.

### *SUCCESSFUL ACTION AND THE COHERENT BRAIN*

During the discussion of education in [Chapter 9](#), we saw that coherent brain function—enlivenment of the total brain—has been closely correlated with greater creativity, intelligence, problem-solving ability, and a number of other desirable qualities. These qualities, and the orderly brain activity at their basis, would appear to be fundamental, and should be predictors of success in all spheres of action. Thinking about this, brain researcher Fred Travis asked himself an interesting question: *Is coherent brain functioning a phenomenon related only to meditation, something only meditators develop, or is it more universal?* He set himself a new research challenge: to study nonmeditators successful in their chosen field and see if

their brains showed the same balanced, integrated patterns he was finding in meditators. As he explained:

We recruited Norwegian athletes who were gold medalists or who consistently placed in the top ten in Olympic National Games and World Games competitions for at least three consecutive seasons, and compared them with athletes who did not perform at that level. We found that these world class athletes did indeed have higher levels of brain integration than the athletes who were not as successful.

Then Travis repeated the experiment with top level managers in the business world.

These were leaders who had taken a company that was failing, and turned it around. Or they took companies that had fewer than ten employees and turned them into companies that had over a hundred. We tried to choose only managers who were socially responsible—I didn't want to get the Enron type, I wanted people who had a bigger picture.

When the researchers studied the brain-wave activity of these business leaders and compared them with a control group of lower-level managers,

we found the same thing we found with the athletes—the top echelon of managers had high levels of brain integration and the lower-level managers did not. Comparing them to our research on TM practitioners, we saw that these highly successful, top-tier performers were operating with levels of brain integration similar to—though not as high as—the TM subjects who had been meditating seven years.

Now, said Travis, comes the important part:

If TM increases the orderliness and coherence of the brain, if it enlivens the total brain, what if we took some athletes, or some managers, taught them TM, and watched their progress compared to a control group who did not learn meditation? Theoretically, their brains should become increasingly orderly, and as that happens, they should be more successful. That's where we're going right now with our research. We've begun approaching some Olympic communities to work with their junior athletes to teach them to meditate and see who are the ones who consistently win.

What's so exciting to me is that this research is bringing the idea of full potential—what it means to be fully human—into the scientific laboratory, *because it can be measured*. That is, once we see that people who are successful have this integrated brain style, and we know how to help people create that brain style—well, the sky's the limit, isn't it?





## CHAPTER ELEVEN

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### THE BEST WE CAN BE: TM AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION

#### *A NEW MODEL OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*

“Every age but ours has had its model, its ideal,” wrote Abraham Maslow in the introduction to his groundbreaking book, *Toward a Psychology of Being*. “All of these have been given up by our culture.... and are now giving way to a new one that is slowly developing in the minds of the most advanced thinkers and researchers on the subject.”<sup>1</sup>

This new ideal is the self-realized, self-actualized man or woman: those highly developed souls who use their powers fully and creatively; who act with spontaneity and freedom; radiate love, kindness, and joy; accept themselves and others; and are self-expressive and fully alive. They recognize the interconnected wholeness of life that unites all beings, and thus they respect and support the right of all to share the common resources of the planet in safety.

In [Chapter 9](#), I suggested that the most important goal of education is full development of the person, or, as Erich Fromm put it in the *Art of Loving*, “Education is identical with helping the child realize his potentialities.”<sup>2</sup> Full development means unfoldment of both the inner and the outer aspects of life. It means cultivating and bringing out our capacities for effective action, along with the blossoming of



our potential for enjoying, appreciating, and gaining some understanding of the beauty and wonder of this world, and that the goal of our deepest spiritual longings should also be fulfilled. It means being the best we can be, which entails enlivening the total potential of the brain, culturing a compassionate heart, and growing into higher states of consciousness.

Although this goal has been the centerpiece of Vedic philosophical and psychological teachings for thousands of years, it is quite new to Western psychology, which has had a different focus. The direction and tenor of psychology had been set by Sigmund Freud, who in 1930 stated categorically that "... the intention that man should be 'happy' is not included in the plan of 'Creation.'"<sup>3</sup>

As a result, three-quarters of a century later, psychologist Martin Seligman lamented that the field of psychology was "half-baked." The part that was fully baked, he said, "was devoted to suffering, victims, mental illness, and trauma." Psychologists had devoted decades to "the pathologies that disable the good life, which make life not worth living," and even if a person can "rid herself of depression, anxiety, and anger, happiness is not guaranteed ... *at its best*, psychology had only told us how to relieve misery, not how to find what is best in life and live it accordingly."<sup>4</sup>

More than 60 years earlier, in 1954, Abraham Maslow had expressed an almost identical sentiment. He wrote:

The science of psychology has been far more successful on the negative than on the positive side. It has revealed to us much about man's shortcomings, his illness, his sins, but little

about his potentialities, his virtues, his achievable aspirations, or his full psychological height. It is as if psychology has voluntarily restricted itself to only half its rightful jurisdiction, the darker, meaner half.<sup>5</sup>

After writing these words, Maslow then dedicated the remainder of his life to studying the bright side, the virtues and potentialities that he believed lay dormant in everyone but were only brought into the light of day by a tiny fraction of the population.

The goal of most Western psychotherapies, despite the work of Maslow and his colleagues and today's proponents of Positive Psychology, is essentially to alleviate the suffering and confusion of the millions of people struggling just to cope with life: to make better decisions (and stop making "wrong" ones that lead to unhappiness or suffering), to resolve relationship crises, break free of addictions and self-destructive behavior, and so on. Only a few farsighted theorists and practitioners are dedicated to helping people achieve the heightened, holistic development of personality that I'll discuss in this chapter, which Maslow called *self-actualization*.

It's important to remember that Western psychology is a very young science, little more than 100 years old. Its insights, methods, and goals are still in formation, and are far from the enormous legacy of knowledge, wisdom, and technologies for growth and enlightenment from the 5,000-year-old Vedic tradition of India from which Maharishi's Vedic Science was born.

In contrast to the Western model, the Vedic ideal is nothing less than the realization of the transcendent essence of life and its integration into higher states of consciousness—to put a permanent end to suffering and to attain a liberated state of bliss.

At the risk of oversimplification, it could be said that the Western way is a psychology of the *waking state* of consciousness, and the Vedic way is a psychology of *enlightenment*, which begins by *transcending* the wakeful state and ends by completely *transforming* it into the value of the transcendent—imbuing every aspect of conscious perception and action with the qualities of the unbounded underlying reality of life. I want to make this clear, lest you think Maharishi’s Vedic Science is only about a high level of personality development. It is far more than that.

William James, the noted American psychologist and philosopher, pointed to this greater realm of possible development in his 1902 classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. In an often-quoted passage, James said:

Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it ... there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence.... [But] no account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded.<sup>6</sup>

#### *THE LESSON OF PEAK EXPERIENCES*

For centuries, people the world over have suffered from an inability to be fully themselves, to realize all that they inwardly know they can be. As the German dramatist Hebbel expressed it, “The man I am greets mournfully the man I might have been.” This is surely one of the saddest statements anyone can make. And yet who among us has not sometimes felt that life seems to be passing by, but we are not full, not really alive, not producing what we could, enjoying as we could, giving as we would wish? Have we not all felt, at some time or another, that we haven’t made all that we could of our lives?

“The first point to agree upon in this enterprise,” wrote William James in another widely cited passage,

is that as a rule men habitually use only a small part of the powers which they actually possess and which they might use under appropriate conditions.

Everyone is familiar with the phenomenon of feeling more or less alive on different days. Everyone knows on any given day that there are energies slumbering in him which the incitements of the day do not call forth.... Most of us feel as if a sort of cloud weighed upon us, keeping us below our highest notch of clearness in discernment, sureness in reasoning, or firmness in deciding. Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake.... We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental and physical resources....

Stating the thing broadly, the human individual thus lives usually far within his limits; he possesses powers of various sorts which he habitually fails to use. He energizes below his

maximum, and he behaves below his optimum.... We are all to some degree oppressed, unfree. We don't come to our own. It is there, but we don't get at it.<sup>7</sup>

And yet we sometimes have moments of feeling supremely alive, joyful, bursting with radiance and life, special times when, as Wordsworth expressed it,

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,

The earth, and every common sight,

To me did seem

Apparell'd in celestial light ...<sup>8</sup>

We have all had such moments, when the glory of life, the beauty, perfection and unity of the cosmos, are revealed to us, making all of life worthwhile. In these rare moments, life becomes suddenly vivid and real. We function most creatively and efficiently, and we feel full of love and energy, truly free.

What brings on these rare experiences? Sometimes love for someone else, sometimes art, sometimes nature. Perhaps, complete absorption in an activity we love. A face, a song, the ocean, a job well done—everyone has their own memories of these moments. Sometimes it seems as if nothing at all brings it about: it just happens of its own accord. But whatever causes these peak experiences, one highly significant lesson can be learned from them: The joy, depth of understanding, creativity, and reverence for life that we feel *all come from within us; they are our own*—but are a deeper aspect of ourselves, ordinarily dormant, asleep, unused. Somewhere in

us, we all have the capacity to function on a much higher level than we ordinarily do. And by our very nature, we are already moving in the direction of bringing out that latent potential.

### *THE IMPULSE TO GROW*

From his very first talks in India in the late 1950s, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi spoke of what he called the *force of evolution*, a tendency inherent in all living things toward growth. Maslow saw the same thing. “All the evidence that we have ...,” he wrote, “indicates that ... in practically every human being ... there is an active will toward health, an impulse toward growth, or toward the actualization of human potentialities,”<sup>9</sup> which is essentially the same as the tendency toward growth evidenced by any biological organism.

Maslow suggested that the higher human capabilities, such as “creativity, spontaneity ... being able to love, yearning for truth” are what he called “embryonic potentialities belonging to [our] species membership just as much as are [our] arms and legs and brains and eyes,”<sup>10</sup> and that these potentialities “press to function and express themselves and to be used and exercised ... and cease their clamor only when they are well used.”<sup>11</sup>

In short, we have within ourselves “a tendency toward, or need for growing in a direction that can be summarized ... as self-actualization, or psychological health.”<sup>12</sup>

Beginning with this premise, Maslow studied the lives of outstanding individuals and creative geniuses in history, as well as living persons who were, in his estimation, more

self-actualized, living up to their potential more fully than most. They were happier, more creative, “fully functioning and healthy human beings.” He believed that by studying people of this caliber: “Perhaps we shall soon be able to use as our guide and model the fully growing and self-fulfilling human being, the one in whom all his potentials are coming to full development, the one whose inner nature expresses itself freely, rather than being warped, repressed, or denied.”<sup>13</sup>

From this study, Maslow was able to discover and describe many of the distinctive characteristics of such people. These discoveries allowed him to formulate Western psychology’s nearest approach to defining an ideal, a goal for human development.

In the upcoming section, I’ll look at some of the qualities Maslow proposed as “among the objectively describable and measurable characteristics of the healthy human specimen”<sup>14</sup> and compare them with experiences reported by TM meditators. Along the way, I’ll point out how some of these correspond to the development of higher states of consciousness now being achieved by substantial numbers of practitioners of TM. In the section after that, I’ll look briefly at what 40 years of research has discovered about the growth of these qualities in meditators.

#### *TM AND THE “CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HEALTHY HUMAN SPECIMEN”*

Here are the primary characteristics and traits that Maslow singled out as representative of the self-actualized person:

- Clearer, more efficient perception of reality

- More openness to experience, greater freshness of appreciation
- Increased integration, wholeness, unity of the person.
- Increased spontaneity, expressiveness, aliveness.
- A real self; firm identity; autonomy; uniqueness
- Resistance to enculturation
- Increased objectivity; detachment; transcendence of self
- Greatly increased creativeness
- Improved interpersonal relationships
- Ability to love

In his work, Maslow was only descriptive—he never suggested how we, too, could develop these qualities and rise to the heights he saw in the exemplary people he studied. If he were alive today, I'm certain he would be thrilled by what you're about to read.

**Clearer, More Efficient Perception of Reality.** This implies not only sharper, but also a more truthful, perception—seeing things as they are. Meditators often report that “mental perception and cognition have sharpened and increased,” and that they “feel able to think more clearly as well as see more deeply into many aspects of nature.”



I believe that these experiences are largely a result of the dissolution of stress due to TM practice, and the more coherent and integrated brain functioning (simultaneous enlivenment of various parts of the brain) that researchers have found to occur during meditation and to be increasingly common in long-term TM practitioners. It makes sense that using more of our total brain potential and at the same time reducing our stress load would produce not only a richer experience on the sensory level, but also a more complete and incisive comprehension.

**More Openness to Experience; Greater Freshness of Appreciation.** Here's how meditators express it:

- “I am not afraid of experimentation in my life, not ‘hung up’ on conformity.”
- “I am in a constant state of discovery as to the simple beauty all about me. It seems that everything I see is more vivid, sharper, and colors are brighter.”
- “I appreciate just living each moment. Day-to-day living now holds a special fascination for me.”

**Increased Integration, Wholeness, Unity of the Person.** What does it mean to be “integrated”? Let's start by following Maslow. He said that self-actualizing persons are more harmonious; they do not struggle against themselves. “The Freudian ‘instincts’ and the defenses are less sharply set off against each other,” he wrote. “The impulses are more expressed and less controlled.”<sup>15</sup> I believe this is similar to what one TM meditator meant when he said, “I'm more able

to feel what I am feeling, rather than what I think I *should* feel.”

Maslow stated that his self-actualizers were more integrated in another way. In such people, the various aspects of the psyche—will, emotions, cognitive faculties—work cooperatively together without conflict. “What such a person wants and enjoys is apt to be just what is good for him.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, as one meditator phrased it, “There seems to be much more of a centeredness to what I am doing ... more single-mindedness of purpose and less ambivalence in my life.”

Or, as people I interviewed said again and again, “I don’t decide—things just happen. Like I just stopped smoking.” The entire personality begins to be harmonious and to desire and act on what is life supporting and beneficial. Many report that they spontaneously and effortlessly start to act in better ways. “I simply noticed that I was a more perceptive and loving human being,” one said.

Meditators use some of the same words Maslow did, especially *whole* and *integrated*, in describing how they feel. “I feel more whole and healthy as a personality,” one remarked. And another: “I have become more effective as a human being, more integrated, and ready to act on every situation that arises.”

Maharishi used the word *integration* in a different way, but one that only adds to this concept. In his writing and teaching, integration signifies the inclusion of the field of Being in an individual’s consciousness, the integration of the Absolute realm of life with the more familiar, ever-changing relative

aspect. In this sense, *integration* means “bringing into harmony the inner creative silence and the outer activity of life.”<sup>17</sup> The more that the universal, unbounded pure consciousness, the Absolute, is integrated with the many facets of an individual personality, the more its qualities—energy, intelligence, happiness, peace, and creativity—are infused into every thought, word, and act.

Full integration means that at all times, in all situations, the direct awareness of one’s essential nature is not lost, but is maintained along with whatever else is being experienced, providing a stable, calm basis for all of life’s activities. One’s awareness is permanently open to the Unified Field, the fountainhead of bubbling creativity at the source of thought. This fully integrated, enlightened state of consciousness is the primary goal of Maharishi’s Vedic Science. It is accomplished through the regular alternation of meditation and activity.

**Increased Spontaneity, Expressiveness, Aliveness.** About these natural qualities of a healthy life, meditators remarked:

- “I’m more open, less afraid of relating to people.”
- “I am better able to act on my feelings.”
- “On the emotional level, I react more honestly to a given situation. My pattern of response ceased to be a gamelike, *set* pattern—and became spontaneous.”
- “Sometimes I just feel so good and full and alive. Always I felt that life could be like it is, but I didn’t know how to live it until I was initiated into TM a year ago.”

**A Real Self; Firm Identity; Autonomy; Uniqueness.** One of the major results of ongoing practice of Transcendental Meditation appears to be a greatly increased self-knowledge and inner harmony, a clarifying of one's identity and direction. As some meditators expressed it:

- “I’m beginning to know who I am, what I’m doing now, and what I will do in the future.”
- “I think that meditation let me cut a pathway through my jungle of egotistical confusion to my self, my real self—me!”

In the language of Vedic Science, a distinction is made between the self (small *s*), the time- and space-bound individuality with all its perceptions, thoughts, feelings, actions and interactions; and the Self (capital *S*), the deepest layer of one's being, the unbounded pure spiritual awareness that is untouched by activity and change. Although we all go through many changes and phases as we move from childhood to old age, our deepest Self remains forever a silent, expansive ocean of pure consciousness—a stable inner happiness that Maharishi calls *bliss*. When we first learn meditation, transcendence is a journey we take from immersion in activity and multiplicity to absorption—usually momentary—in silence and wholeness. Eventually, we grow into the sense that we *are* that wholeness. We always have been; we just didn't know it.

**Resistance to Enculturation.** Because they have a firm grasp on their own identity and a strong sense of autonomy, meditators—along with Maslow's self-actualizers—tend to be more inner directed, freer to find their own values and

direction in life, and less influenced by the opinions and values of others.

One of the first psychological studies of TM measured the degree to which meditators were “field independent”—that is, whether they were more reliant on an internal frame of reference in processing information, or more influenced by the surrounding environment and its pressures. The study used the “Embedded Figures Test,” which asks the test subject to pick figures out of a confusing and distracting background, much like the puzzles that ask you to “find all the monkeys hidden in the trees” in a child’s coloring book.

Field-independent people have a strong sense of separate identity. They’re interested in new concepts, have self-defined goals, are good at figuring out how to handle new situations, “can easily impose their own sense of order in a situation that is lacking structure,” and are less affected by criticism. In the study, 20 men and 20 women were randomly assigned to learn TM or serve as a control group. They were given three tests of perceptual ability and perceptual style, and then three months later were tested again. The meditators showed gains in all three tests.<sup>18</sup>

In my research, meditators gave similar subjective reports, including this one: “I’m slowly becoming aware of the values that are real to me and the importance of respecting them, rather than super-imposing some value that I may have heard or read.”

**Increased Objectivity; Detachment; Transcendence of Self.** Increased objectivity means that we can see reality more clearly, as discussed above, and also that we can see *ourselves*

more clearly. Meditators demonstrate this ability to view themselves in an objective manner. For example, they speak of their personal growth with exuberance, but are also aware of what remains: “There has been a little broadening, but I have a long way to go. I still grasp at people and things,” said one.

Another said, “Although I still fall very short of my personal values, meditation has given me a path and a means to live up to a world of love, harmony, and openness.”

“The most significant effect of meditation for me,” another TM’er stated, “has been the increase in awareness of Self, during activity. This increased self-awareness has permitted me to see my actions more clearly and objectively, to be more deeply aware of my thoughts, to relate to my surroundings more intimately, and to people more empathetically.”

**Greatly Increased Creativeness.** Maslow found an abundance of creativity among his self-actualizers, both within the borders of the creative arts and outside them, in all aspects of daily living. “I found it necessary,” he said, “to distinguish ‘special talent creativeness’ from ‘self-actualizing creativeness,’ which sprang much more directly from the personality, and which showed itself widely in the ordinary affairs of life.... It looked like a tendency to do *anything* creatively: e.g., housekeeping, teaching, etc.”<sup>19</sup>

The experiences of meditators closely parallel Maslow’s criteria:

“Since I have begun the practice of Transcendental Meditation,” a student said, “I have become more creative in

all that I do. In the past, I was creative within certain areas. I painted, worked in ceramics, and danced but now I find that creativity is a way of life. When I work, cook, study, or make gifts for my friends, I feel that I am creating.”

Emily Wessel, a dance student at American University in Washington, D.C., said, “Before learning Transcendental Meditation I tried several forms of meditation, but none of them ever came easy or provided any real results. Learning the TM technique was a wonderful surprise. I took to it quickly and immediately began seeing benefits. Since I started practicing it regularly, my creative expression through dance has simply exploded, I have been able to tap into a resource that I did not know existed within me. In the past, I have always looked outside of myself to be artistically inspired; it never occurred to me that I could be inspired from within.”

An extraordinary example of creativity, Sharon Isbin is one of the world’s premier classical guitarists, and has been a practitioner of Transcendental Meditation since she was a teenager in the 1970s. *Gramophone* magazine recently said of her: “No superlative would be excessive in describing Sharon Isbin’s performances.... Her work on behalf of the guitar’s present and future remains unparalleled ... supported by skill, musicality, dedication and seemingly boundless energy.” She is the first guitarist in more than four decades to be awarded two classical Grammys. Alongside a grueling international performance schedule that includes well over 100 concerts a year, she finds time to head the guitar department (which she founded) at the prestigious Juilliard School. In addition to her solo recitals, she has appeared with more than 160 orchestras.

“I’ve been doing Transcendental Meditation for decades,” she said. “It’s really a great way to access your inner creativity and find ways of focusing on whatever your goals are. It’s a mechanism of stress release but also of concentration.... And when you’re performing at your very best, you’re at one with the music, you’re at one with the energy and the universe—and all that is being shared with your audience.”<sup>20</sup>

Gary Kaplan, M.D., a neurologist, offered a brain-based explanation of why TM would enhance creativity. “Breakthrough ‘aha’ moments of creativity have been associated with an increase in power of alpha brainwave activity, and an increase in synchronous alpha activity between the two hemispheres. There is a real similarity between the brain activity measured during creative moments and during moments of transcending during the Transcendental Meditation technique.”

Another high-level artistic creator is Mindy Weisel, a world-renowned painter and glass artist. Weisel has enjoyed dozens of solo exhibitions, and her work is represented in some of the world’s premier museums, including the Smithsonian, the Israel Museum, and the Hirshhorn. “I am happier and more creative now than I ever would have imagined,” she says. “I just wish I had started to meditate years ago. I never realized meditation was something you can be taught. I would go every year to a health spa, and every year I would try. They would say, ‘This hour is going to be for meditation.’ I’d go in, I’d sit down, and I’d go, ‘Hmm ... okay, so what am I supposed to do with myself?’ and I’d leave. Now I know: You can learn to meditate. You close your eyes and you have this deep, profound, meaningful rest.



It is beautiful, easy, simple. You are in a state of being.... and then somehow that lasts, and it accumulates.”

Since learning Transcendental Meditation, she reported, “I’m being more present in the creative process, in the work itself, also. Work doesn’t have to be so hard. Work can come from a place of flowing, of openness, of responsiveness, just being more aware.”

**Improved Interpersonal Relationships.** Much of the sweetness of life comes from our personal relationships. This is true of even the most casual and transitory of warm exchanges, of business dealings conducted with integrity and conscious intent to create a win-win situation, and is all the more true of the deep and abiding intimacies of our lives. Throughout this book, and especially in [Chapter 8](#), there has been ample confirmation of welcome growth in this area.

**Ability to Love.** Growth of love is one of the main outcomes of the regular practice of Transcendental Meditation, and surely one of the most significant. Probably the greatest obstacle to being a more loving, patient, compassionate person is stress. When we are tense, worried, afraid, or angry, we don’t have much free psychological space for warm feelings to well up and flow to others in kind words or helpful, nourishing actions. Our hearts are like the “small pond” Maharishi described, “where the love can flow only as ripples and not as waves of the sea. Such is the love of most of us.” When such a shallow pond “moves to rise high in waves, it only stirs the mud at the bottom.”<sup>21</sup> Yet most of us want our hearts to be open and lively and project warmth toward others—to be oceans rather than ponds.

Through regular meditation, not only do we glide more smoothly through the day, in a relaxed way that allows potential stressors to slide on by without affecting us much, but we also progressively chip away at our physical and emotional backlog of stress. Memories of stressful events may remain, but the *charge* goes out of them. In traditional Indian philosophy, meditation is said to “roast the seeds of karma” so that they cannot germinate. Something that previously might have “rubbed us the wrong way,” touching against a perennially raw psychic nerve and igniting a negative response, doesn’t do so any longer. We become free to express our warmer feelings. The “shallow pond” of our stressed-out hearts grows toward being an ocean.

Dr. Maslow enumerated at least a dozen other characteristics of self-actualizers, all of which have direct parallels in the lives of TM meditators. I could continue to list them, but my point in drawing this comparison has surely been made: *Individuals practicing Transcendental Meditation exhibit to an exceptionally high degree the qualities Maslow singled out as representative of the psychologically healthy, self-realized individual.*

#### *FOUR DECADES OF RESEARCH ON TM AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION*

Since 1972, when the first prospective study—“Influence of Transcendental Meditation on a Measure of Self-Actualization”—was published in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, a steady stream of research on positive psychological and behavioral changes through TM has given objective confirmation to the kind of glowing subjective reports of meditators reported above. In that

pioneering study, conducted at the University of Cincinnati, Sanford Nidich and colleagues administered Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), a widely respected test based on Maslow's categories of self-actualization, to a group of 35 students. Half began TM two days later, and after two months, the groups were tested again.

Upon the initial evaluation, the experimental (meditating) group and the control (nonmeditating) group did not differ significantly on any of the scales. But after two months, while the control group's scores did not change, the meditators scored higher on 6 of the 12 categories indicating increased self-actualization. Their growth was found in "self-regard," "acceptance of aggression" (which measures not the capacity to "turn the other cheek" but rather to accept the existence of hostile or aggressive feelings within oneself without denial or repression), and higher "capacity for intimate contact," that is, warm interpersonal relationships. "Spontaneity" was found to increase, and there was a marked tendency toward "inner directedness" rather than "other directedness." A year later, two of the same authors repeated the study with a second paired group of subjects; this time the meditators scored significantly higher in 10 of the 12 categories.<sup>22</sup>

By the late 1980s, in addition to the many studies on health and physiology discussed above, a body of psychological studies on TM and self-actualization had accumulated. In 1991 Charles (Skip) Alexander, of Harvard University, performed a rigorous meta-analysis on 42 of those studies, comparing the effects of TM practice to other types of meditation, relaxation techniques, and in two cases, to counseling.

The bottom line with respect to Dr. Alexander’s study is that what is called the “effect size”—the amount of change or growth in the experimental subjects—was *three times larger* for the subjects practicing the TM technique than the effect size for any of the other techniques studied in the 42 research papers. A differential of 10 percent would have been significant, but this result is nothing less than stunning, especially to anyone who might believe that “all meditation techniques are essentially the same.” [Figure 11-1]

It’s likely that this differential was responsible for something else that Alexander discovered in looking carefully into all the research papers: In many of these studies, the dropout rate among the controls—those who did not learn TM—was quite high, in one case 44 percent, indicating a lack of contentment with the results of the practices they were assigned, whereas the attrition rate for TM meditators was at, or close to, zero.

### INCREASED SELF-ACTUALIZATION

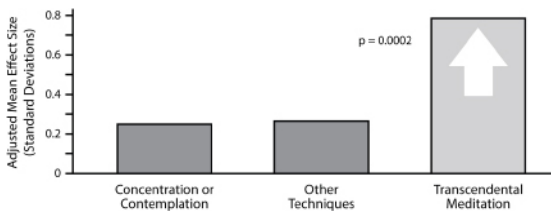


Figure 11-1

A statistical meta-analysis of all available studies (42) indicated that the effect of the TM technique on increasing self-actualization is approximately three times greater than that of other forms of meditation and relaxation.

Alexander and his colleagues identified three major areas of growth shown by the TM meditators:

1. *Affective Maturity*—This “indicates a person who is open to his or her feelings,” and who is “capable of engaging in warm interpersonal relationships.”

2. *Integrative Perspective on Self and World*—This portrays a person “who has a positive view of self and humanity, who is able to integrate dichotomies, and who embraces higher values such as nurturance of the good in oneself and others.” This profile, Alexander wrote, depicts a person “who is fulfilled in his relations with self and world.”

3. *Resilient Sense of Self*—This describes an individual “who maintains a stable internal frame of reference, whose awareness is in the ‘here and now,’ and whose self responds adaptively to both internal or external challenges.”

Although there have been numerous studies since Dr. Alexander’s paper was published in the journal *Social Behavior and Personality*, it still stands as the definitive work on TM and self-actualization.<sup>23</sup>

### *AN “ADJUNCT TO PSYCHOTHERAPY”?*

The research we’ve been looking at reveals a clear pattern of growth toward a more healthy and vital state of being. It strongly suggests that TM might be, at the very least, a highly useful supplement to psychotherapy. Numerous psychiatrists and therapists have reported on their use of TM and enthusiastically endorsed it. One of the earliest of these endorsements came from Dr. A. James Morgan, Director of

Adult Treatment Services at the Community Mental Health Center of Pennsylvania Hospital, who said that “the possible uses of the technique as an adjunct to psychotherapy are exciting indeed.... The general reduction in tension and increased alertness should complement any psychotherapeutic procedure”<sup>24</sup>

More radically, TM might be a replacement for much of what is currently used by the psychotherapeutic profession in attempting to help individuals gain stability and happiness. When I was teaching in New York, a meditator from Brooklyn told me, “I didn’t tell my therapist that I had started meditating for almost two months—until one day he suggested that we stop the therapy or reduce to a once-a-month basis, due to the progress I had been making in the past couple of months!”

Norman E. Rosenthal, M.D., a psychiatrist, NIH researcher, and the scientist who first recognized Seasonal Affective Disorder and pioneered its treatment with light therapy, recently turned his attention to TM. In a 2011 talk in New York City, Dr. Rosenthal said, “As a psychiatrist for many years, I have used and continue to use many kinds of treatments, and I feel there is some value to them. There are people who may benefit from any one of them. But given my perspective, what I think is the real news here, is that this particular kind of meditation is a very, very potent, beneficial influence that needs to be considered alongside, or maybe ahead of, some other interventions.”<sup>25</sup>

Margaretta Bowers, an eminent psychoanalyst and author to whom I taught TM in the early 1970s, very soon started sending her patients to the TM center to learn the practice.

She told me that after beginning TM, they progressed much more quickly in their therapy.

She said:

All who have persevered with TM have shown a much faster rate of improvement. With several, this improvement has been dramatic, even spectacular. Some have been relieved of symptoms that had never been helped by psychotherapy. With two such patients, this relief and general improvement, increase in ego-strength, general productivity at work and happiness in living have continued with greatly decreased hours of psychotherapy. With every patient who has been faithful in TM, the improvement has been at least twice the expected rate, as judged by previous experience with the patient. Sometimes it seems to be at least ten times the expected rate. Sometimes when a patient complains about not moving at a satisfactory rate, I find that the patient has stopped TM. When TM is again undertaken, movement picks up again. With TM, patients need fewer hours of psychotherapy, and the sessions are more meaningful and useful. Sometimes TM becomes the principal therapy. Psychotherapy sessions become secondary and ... can be understood as just talking things over with an old friend.<sup>26</sup>

### *NORMAL AND SUBNORMAL*

Some years ago I gave a lecture on TM at Penn State University. One of the people who picked me up at the airport was a bright young woman who had been meditating only three months. Driving through the serene Pennsylvania landscape was a pleasure, and I enjoyed listening to her talk about the changes she was experiencing. "School is a lot

easier,” she said, “and I don’t even believe how enjoyable it’s become. I even like writing papers! I seem to have a lot more friends, to be learning more in class—everything is much more fun. Is this normal?”

Being accustomed to hearing such stories (one of the occupational hazards of teaching TM is that one is constantly barraged by good news!), I simply told her, “Yes, it’s very normal. Just keep on—it gets better all the time.” She replied with a delighted laugh.

Later on, as I was walking across the campus, I reflected on that brief interchange and saw a great deal more depth in the implications of our discussion. I realized that it was indeed “normal” for a person to be creative, energetic, and happy. It is not normal to be unhappy, to suffer, and to be unfulfilled. When we see a suffering person, we don’t smile and say, “That is normal life.” Our heart goes out to people who are miserable; we want to do what we can to restore them to a “normal” state.

All the growth and transformative changes I’ve been documenting in this and other chapters are only indications of progress toward becoming normal—leaving behind the limitations of stress, anxiety, and fear, moving beyond the restricted understanding and narrow vision that cripple our lives and keep us from the achievement and satisfaction that are rightly ours. “Normality,” Maslow stated, “is the highest excellence of which we are capable. But this ideal is not an unattainable goal set far out ahead of us; rather it is actually within us, existent but hidden.”<sup>27</sup>



Maharishi would concur with this definition. When a person does not live a normal life, he wrote, “a life using his full potential, he feels miserable and tense and suffers in many ways.... But when one naturally uses all the resources of mind, body, and Being ... then life can be said to be normal.”<sup>28</sup>

“What are accepted as normal human values by the world today,” he said, “are, in fact, subnormal in comparison with the possibility that is available to everyone through Transcendental Meditation. Only when we are enjoying the 200 percent value of life in daily living—100 percent inner value and 100 percent outer value—are we living up to normal human potential.”<sup>29</sup>





## CHAPTER TWELVE

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### WHAT MATTERS MOST: VALUES IN A TRANSFORMING WORLD

I didn't expect or intend to write a chapter about values—the principles and standards that guide our lives. But as I interviewed meditators and received responses to the questionnaires I had distributed, I found that it was something people wanted to talk about. What they almost invariably said is that they found their values changing due to meditation, in ways they were surprised and happy about.

They had learned TM because they were looking for more energy, more joyfulness, less stress. They expected their meditation practice to help them achieve the things they already valued: greater and more effortless success in school or work, better health, more harmony and stability in relationships, and perhaps a deeper sense of spirituality. They didn't expect *what* they valued to change, but for quite a few people, that's what happened. Not right away, but over months and years, they found themselves, for example, caring more about other people and the state of the world, or acting in more ethical ways, even unable to commit a minor "sin" like taking home a sandwich from a restaurant where they worked.

They weren't asked to behave differently; no moral codes, no "do's and don'ts" are part of learning or practicing TM. It just happened. This development supports Maharishi's contention

that practicing TM leads to behavior that is spontaneously more positive and life supporting.

It's also a hopeful signal that a worrisome trend of our times, the decline or disappearance of values, may be reversible. If you follow the news even a little, the increasing abandonment of standards and values is difficult to miss. On every level of society, lack of values is blatant: cheating in schools, colleges, and military academies; CEOs and high corporate officials lying, sometimes under oath, about the safety of dangerous and harmful products while collecting multigazillion-dollar salaries; athletes caught using banned drugs that give them an unfair competitive advantage over those who obey the rules; government officials bought and paid for by wealthy special interests—the list of values-free behavior is virtually endless.

And it is a worldwide state of affairs. A December 2010 survey of 91,500 people in 86 countries conducted by Transparency International (an organization that tracks social and political corruption around the globe), found that eight of ten people believe their government is corrupt or extremely corrupt; one in four people had paid a bribe in the last 12 months. And this trend seems to be gaining traction: while “only” one in five people over 50 paid a bribe, fully a third of all those under 30 did so.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, large numbers of people throughout the world share some basic and meaningful ideals. Everywhere on Earth, people value kindness, affection, honesty, generosity. People feel, even if they do not always consciously acknowledge it, an underlying interconnectedness with others, and thus the rightness of caring responsibly for

one another as well as for the planet that supports us all. Everyone wants to be happy. Parents want their children to grow up in a peaceful world. All of us desire that our friends and relatives will be safe, healthy, and comfortable.

These basic human concerns and shared values aren't complicated. And they stand in stark contrast to those who would divide us against one another, who feel no qualms about deceiving or exploiting people in order to make money or gain power, who blithely deplete earth's resources, pollute air, water, and land, and conduct the organized murder of thousands or tens of thousands.

*LIFE AND NON-LIFE: REVOLUTION BY CONSCIOUSNESS*

“There is a growing polarization occurring in the United States and in the whole world,” Erich Fromm wrote in *The Revolution of Hope*.

There are those who are attracted to force, “law and order,” bureaucratic methods, and eventually to non-life, and those with a deep longing for life.... This new front is a movement which combines the wish for profound changes in our economic and social practice with changes in our psychic and spiritual approach to life. [I]ts aim is the activation of the individual.... It is a movement in the name of life ...<sup>2</sup>

Charles A. Reich, in his widely acclaimed book *The Greening of America*, saw something similar:

There is a revolution coming. It will not be like revolutions of the past. It will originate with the individual and with culture.

And it will change the political structure only as its final act.... It promises a higher reason, a more human community, and a new and liberated individual. Its ultimate creation will be a new and enduring wholeness and beauty—a renewed relationship of man to himself, to other men, to society, to nature, and to the land.<sup>3</sup>

When I was a young man in the 1960s, I felt that my generation was “special” in our rejection of the status quo, our refusal to accept the disconnect between our vision of how good, how meaningful, and how beautiful life could be and the actuality of what it was. Many of us were motivated by what eminent historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., called a “determination to make reality live up to rhetoric.” But of course, other generations have had high ideals, too. The ideals of freedom, of love for our fellow humans and for all of the natural world, of achieving peace on planet Earth, are as old as humanity and belong to people of all ages and backgrounds. And yet we see that they have not been attained.

“At the heart of everything,” said Reich, pointing to how these ideals *can* be achieved, “is what we shall call a change of consciousness.”<sup>4</sup> This is exactly what Maharishi’s work was about, and what I believe is behind the growth in personal values meditators are experiencing in the present day.

### *VIEWS FROM THE TOP RUNG*

Ray Dalio, the financial wizard we heard from in [Chapter 10](#), and who certainly qualifies as being at the top rung of economic success, said that he has been “very lucky” to have had the opportunity “to see what it’s like to have little or no

money and what it's like to have a lot of it. I'm lucky because people make such a big deal of it and, if I didn't experience both, I wouldn't be able to know how important it really is for me.”

What he found, Dalio said—and his personal assessment is supported by substantial sociological research—is that having a lot of money isn't that much better than “having enough to cover the basics. That's because, for me, the best things in life—meaningful work, meaningful relationships, interesting experiences, good food, sleep, music, ideas, sex, and other basic needs and pleasures—are not, past a certain point, materially improved upon by having a lot of money.”<sup>5</sup>

Paul Saltzman, a TV and film director and producer who was in Maharishi's academy in India in 1968 with the Beatles, recalls this encounter with George Harrison: “George spoke softly as he said to me, ‘You can have everything in life. Like, we're the Beatles, aren't we? We can have anything that money can buy. And all the fame we could dream of. And then what? It isn't love. It isn't health. It isn't peace inside, is it?’”<sup>6</sup>

Ed is another man who found status and making a lot of money to be less than ultimately fulfilling. He is a high-ranking executive of one of the world's largest multinational corporations. At 46, with his stylishly long hair beginning to gray, he is a strikingly good-looking man, tall and strong featured, with bright, steady eyes. We spoke one evening about his interest in Transcendental Meditation:

I think most people who take up TM do so because they acknowledge certain needs within themselves. With me, these

needs had been recognized for some time. It came to a head when I realized that I had reached the point where I had all the material things I needed.

There was just nothing I couldn't have in a material sense. And it was a great shock (though I hate to admit it) to realize that this was not going to give me anything at all, literally nothing; I was no happier today than when I started, you know, "up the ladder," seeking something out of life that turns out to be far too material, I'm afraid. And it's rather a disquieting thing, at 46, to realize that if you haven't found it now, maybe you're on the wrong path.

So I think already before I started TM, I realized that somehow the answer was to be found within myself, and not outside myself; that I couldn't look into the store window and say, "I want this, this and this," and then find instant happiness. Instead of looking in the store window, I had to look within myself, and that's really what TM is all about: looking inward to find the answers to our being, our own identity.

In the business world, I have always known anxiety, I've always known certain fears, apprehensions, in part generated by a constant sense of competition, a need to acquire something—whether status within an organization, material position in the world, or whatever. There is always that fear and anxiety that somehow you are not going to make it, or that when you do get one more rung up the ladder, somehow it doesn't have any reward. When I started TM, I found that the anxieties and fears began to dissipate.



War, racial prejudice—all the problems of our everyday life—stem from humanity’s anxieties and apprehensions, things people don’t understand. TM deals directly with this because it helps us overcome our fears and anxieties by dissolving them, and by leading us to something far more important, which is love, love of oneself and love of things around us, and a far greater realization of what life is. In a sense it leads us to re-explore all the values that we have learned in our lives.

I think that through this inward search, more and more people will come to a feeling of love for themselves and for mankind beyond anything that has been known before in our civilizations. And this, of course, is going to impinge upon war, violence, and that sort of thing because there won’t be a need for it anymore. It will become obsolete.

*“The gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.”<sup>7</sup>*

— **ROBERT F. KENNEDY**

### *VALUES AND CONSCIOUSNESS*

“The values I have are the same good values I had before meditating,” one practitioner of Transcendental Meditation

wrote, “but strengthened—as is my ability and will to live by them now facilitated and strengthened.” Others find that not only are their values lived up to more readily, but, as I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the values themselves have become considerably higher. “Religious, philosophical, and personal values have developed in a way I couldn’t even conceive of before I began meditating,” one person said. “Things just start coming out from the inside, and life becomes less a matter of trying to live according to certain values. I simply noticed I was a more perceptive and loving human being.”

The innocent nature of this development is especially interesting. Quite a few people said something like, “Actually, I had hoped for much less before beginning meditation—more on a superficial level. I really didn’t know the depth or breadth of what was being offered to me. It was an intuitive decision, a grasp in the dark. I have discarded a whole set of meaningless values, and am in a state of constant discovery as to the simple beauty all about me.”

Catalyzed by TM, an effortless, organic process of growth seems to occur, natural and unself-conscious, which nourishes every branch of an individual’s “tree of life,” including the values that guide our actions. It isn’t necessary or helpful to judge ourselves, or to condemn ourselves for not living up to what we hold to be right or good. It is only necessary to begin to grow, for as we grow, so do our values and our ability to live by them.

The research-based knowledge we are gaining of human nature, Abraham Maslow said, gives us “the insight that human evil is largely human weakness” and that it is

“forgivable, understandable and also, in principle, curable.”<sup>8</sup> This understanding—especially in contrast to the truly soul-crushing notion that we are all somehow inherently “sinners” rather than bright, free beings full of infinite possibility and “created in the image of God”—brings great comfort and hope to life. Indian philosophy in general, and Maharishi and his great predecessors including Paramahansa Yogananda, Ramana Maharishi, Swami Vivekananda, and Nisargadatta Maharaj, have helped turn the tide from, as one sage phrased it, “original sin to original bliss”—referring to the Vedic understanding that who we really are at the deepest level of our being is unbounded, eternal bliss consciousness.

In his writing and speaking, Maharishi repeatedly used the same word Maslow used; he emphasized that wrongdoing stems from *weakness*, which was his general term for the narrow perspective and lack of understanding, caused by stress, that lead to wrong decisions harmful to oneself and others. Right action, he always insisted, is spontaneous from a higher level of consciousness.

*UNSCRAMBLING VALUES:  
INNOCENCE AND THE GOOD LIFE*

A fundamental question faced by conscientious individuals in every generation is this: *Once I know what is right, when I have a standard for good or appropriate behavior, how do I do it?* It does not much matter how one arrives at the certainty of right and wrong, whether it is via belief and trust in scriptures, personal observation and analysis, intuition, or any other way. The task is getting oneself to honor the perception or the belief by acting rightly.

A relatively new meditator told me that at the time she learned TM, “I did not much consider my personal and religious values.” After only two and a half years, she said, “I feel that I am becoming a truly moral and religious person. Meditation has made following the traditionally proven ethics of right behavior an easy and desirable matter.”

I find such statements truly remarkable. In my own life, I have tried my best to do what is right, but like just about everyone else on the planet, I have not always succeeded. Like Saint Paul, I have sometimes found: “I want to do the good, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but I do the very evil I do not want!”<sup>9</sup>

The desire to act rightly was there, Paul tells us: “I delight in the law of God in my inner being.”

But despite that, right action was difficult if not impossible: “I see a different law in my members waging war against the law of my mind.”

In other words, as Jesus is reported to have said: “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”<sup>10</sup>

This is our universal human experience, and it takes endless forms, from addictions and compulsions to the everyday experience of deciding to do something—or not to do it—and then proceeding in the opposite direction. That’s what makes these statements by meditators so exciting.

How and where do we find, acquire, or develop the strength to do what we have understood and feel in our heart is the right thing? According to Maharishi, it’s not a question of

will; or if it is, it's a matter of aligning our individual will with what some people call the Will of God, which Maharishi equated with Natural Law, the guiding intelligence of nature. By allowing our mind to quite effortlessly expand so that we gradually come to feel identified or united with the silent level of nature that upholds life everywhere in a harmonious manner, we find ourselves spontaneously speaking and acting in ways that also uphold life.

“Before I started meditating,” said a young woman, “my values were pretty scrambled. I had a vague idea of how I ‘should’ act, but I never really had the strength or the courage to practice what I considered a moral life. So I found myself doing things that I didn’t really want to do, simply because other people seemed to find them pleasing (drinking, first, then later smoking marijuana). However, since meditating, I’ve stopped trying to figure out how to act, and have just begun to behave naturally. Suddenly I found myself living a life that before meditating I wanted, but never thought I could have.... I am leading a life that allows me to like myself.”

*“To live a moral life is to live in accordance with Dharma.... Dharma may be translated as ‘Natural Law’ ... the principle of order and regularity seen in the behavior of natural phenomena, and also the idea of a universal moral law.... Every aspect of life is regulated by Dharma; the physical laws which regulate the rising of the sun, the succession of the seasons, the movement of the constellations.... Living in accordance with Dharma and implementing its requirements leads to happiness, fulfillment, and salvation; neglecting or transgressing against it leads to endless suffering....”<sup>11</sup>*

— FROM *BUDDHISM*, BY DAMIEN KEOWN

## *RIGHT ACTION*

We've seen that many TM practitioners report a greater ability to know what is right and what is wrong for them, and a corresponding ability to act rightly, according to their own standards. As mentioned above, no moral codes, no lists of do's and don'ts, are demanded or even suggested when a person begins TM. The teachers teach meditation; they don't tell people how they should behave. They feel confident that everyone, at their level of development, will act as well as they are able, and as they grow, their actions will become better. Along with Maharishi, the teachers trained by him seem to possess an unshakable confidence in our inherent goodness, and in our ability to grow and express more of the good within us.

Philosophers have been debating the meaning of “right” and “good” for centuries, yet I think most people recognize—and always have recognized—that good action (or thought or speech) produces beneficial, life-supporting influences for oneself and others. Whatever helps to maintain and evolve life, whatever is conducive to growth and harmonious progress, is right and good.

A similar definition appeared in a magazine article: “What Would a Scientific Religion Be Like?” in which the author, a physicist, concluded that “it is possible to evolve a guide to what I should be doing, namely, those things that help to bring about the full development of other human spirits.”<sup>12</sup> Action that fulfills this purpose, directly or indirectly, is good action.

Right, said Maharishi in *Science of Being and Art of Living*,

is that which produces a good influence everywhere.... It is right not to harm anyone and wrong to do harm. It is right to see good in others and wrong to see bad in anyone. It is right to love people and wrong to hate them.... It is right to do things which will be helpful to oneself and others and it is wrong to do things which will harm others. It is right to speak the truth but wrong to speak words which will harm others even if they are the truth. It is right to be good to others and wrong to be unpleasant to anyone.<sup>13</sup>

Looked at from this perspective, we might say that a practice such as TM is the best action anyone could perform, because it contributes to the “full development” that makes all our actions stronger and more life supporting. Any other action can be said to be relative in nature—it has some good effect and some bad effect. An action may be good in one situation, but in another may be totally inappropriate. No action can be said to be all good unless it leads to a higher level of life. Growth to a higher level can have only good effects, on both the individual and all those whose lives fall within the range of his or her influence.

As Huston Smith wrote in his classic work, *The Religions of Man*: “The only thing good without qualification is extended vision, the enlargement of one’s understanding and awareness of what reality is ultimately like.”<sup>14</sup> Growth of consciousness, deepening our understanding, perception, and love is the one way to establish ourselves on a platform from which all our actions will ultimately be good actions.

“TRANSCENDENTAL MORALITY”

Toward the end of the 20th century, eminent Harvard psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg postulated that growth of ethical behavior occurs in six stages. The sixth stage he called “universal ethical principle,” a way of thinking about morality that Kohlberg felt was an ideal level that very few people attain. Those who do are guided by “a few abstract, universal principles (e.g., equality of all people, respect for human dignity, commitment to justice) that transcend specific norms and rules. They answer to a strong inner conscience.”<sup>15</sup>

Sounds pretty good, right? But late in his life, Kohlberg felt he had not done full justice to the even higher stage of moral reasoning that a few enlightened people reach, and he hypothesized a seventh level. This highest stage he called “Transcendental Morality,” or “Morality of Cosmic Orientation,” in which the individual feels connected to the whole. The essence of this stage, he wrote, “is the sense of being a part of the whole of life,”<sup>16</sup> and the moral sense of such people “rests on a sense of connectedness between the individual human mind and the larger cosmic whole or order.”<sup>17</sup>

People practicing TM began reporting such experiences 30 years ago or more; many today are living life from that level. “I now find my individual interests have broadened to include universal interests,” one person said. “My awareness has expanded to such a degree that I can undertake worldwide desires and responsibilities. Naturally, I still have concern for my individual affairs, but the ideas and projects that really interest me these days are ones that extend to all mankind.”

Growing into the higher stages of moral reasoning (in Kohlberg’s terms) or into higher states of consciousness,



means seeing a bigger picture, expanding one's sense of caring. We all begin our lives caring about ourselves as the center of the universe. We want what we want, and we want it *now!* Living in a family necessarily expands our sphere of caring to a few others, and gradually as we grow both in experience and consciousness, we may come to value many others and to “love thy neighbor as thyself.”

This means growth beyond individual concerns, beyond family, beyond tribalism and patriotism, to being a global citizen with compassion and caring for all life. It means the spontaneous ability to take other people's interests and needs into consideration. We can think here of the Dalai Lama, whose philosophical knowledge is extremely rich and profound, yet who has distilled the essence of morality to a word he uses all the time—*kindness*.

Michael Puerini, M.D., medical director for the Department of Corrections of the state of Oregon, has observed the effect of the TM program on people in the state's prison system—both those incarcerated and those on the other side of the bars. “You can't teach compassion,” he said, “but there's something about the TM technique that brings compassion out, and a compassionate person is a healthier person.”

Of course, the kind of lofty “cosmic” or wide-angle vision and behavior that I'm describing here does not appear fully bloomed when a person learns Transcendental Meditation; it blossoms gradually over years of dedicated daily practice. All of us here on Earth are a mix of strengths and weaknesses, “good” and “bad.” We do our best, and sometimes we make mistakes. Growing into enlightenment takes time, and until

we get there—well, we are mortal, fallible, and subject to all the ills and foibles “that flesh is heir to,” as Shakespeare phrased it. It’s important to look kindly on ourselves as well as on others, remembering that we’re all on the path. The trick is, as Maharishi said, “If you fall down and skin your knees, just stand up and keep going.”

To keep going means to continue doing all that is possible to get attuned with the total potential of Natural Law on the deepest level of one’s own awareness. That level of cosmic silence is what Maharishi referred to as the “home of all the laws of nature.” It is the field that governs all actions and interactions in the vast universe quite flawlessly, automatically guiding the behavior and growth of all beings except us humans, who have the freedom to ignore or violate the laws of nature. Birds go to sleep at dusk; we can choose to stay up all night and get ourselves out of step with nature’s powerful rhythms. We also have the freedom to consciously align or realign ourselves with the great forces of nature that are supporting the evolution and fulfillment of everyone and everything.

### *SELFISH AND UNSELFISH*

Especially in the earlier days of his global teaching activities, Maharishi was sometimes confronted with this question: “Surely one must be a very selfish person if he sees suffering in others and yet is happy and content?” His reply is instructive:

An unhappy man, even if he has a great desire to help others, what can he do? An unhappy man is himself worried and miserable. In his sympathy he will begin to weep; other than

that he has no ability to help. The result will be that before only one man was weeping, and now the second also begins to weep.

But if he gains the technique of meditation and begins to meditate, he becomes happy in himself. He becomes wiser, more able than before, and then he goes with a happy face, a great atmosphere of harmony to the suffering man. He changes his atmosphere, cheers him up by his presence. Therefore, even if we have a desire, as all of us humanly have the desire to help other suffering people, the only way to help others is to get the technique of being happy in ourselves.

So it is extremely necessary for us to acquire the ability of maintaining our own standard of peace and happiness before we jump into the world of suffering. When a man becomes happy, his compassion grows. A happy man would be able to see the unhappiness of others much more than an unhappy man. An unhappy man is busy suffering himself; he has no time to see the suffering of others. Compassion is not awake in an unhappy, miserable mind. But compassion and kindness are wide awake in a man who is happy, who is peaceful.

This is the experience of many meditators. “From rather ego-centered values (money, big house, nice things), I have changed to other-people-centered values,” a woman from California said. “I now have a real concern for those about me, and am no longer as much concerned with satisfying my own ego impulses.... It makes me a lot happier to have values that encompass other people, because when I give, I really do receive.”

*“What need for great explanations? The immature ones work for their own benefit, the buddhas work for the benefit of others. Just look at the difference between them.”*

— SHANTIDEVA, 8TH-CENTURY BUDDHIST SCHOLAR AND TEACHER

Among the people I interviewed, many made similar comments: “I seem to have a new sense of tenderness and compassion. I don’t think I’ve ever really understood what love, compassion, or brotherhood meant before, but now, every day, I learn a little more.”

“Before meditation,” a student at The University of Arizona said, “I was going through a religious and philosophical crisis. I couldn’t understand why there was so much suffering and hate. Meditation has helped me alleviate my own weakness, and in a small way, help others. I have always believed in the goodness and potentiality of mankind, and meditation has strengthened this belief. Although I still fall very short of my personal values, meditation has given me a path and a means to live up to a world of love, harmony, and openness.”

### *A NEW UNIVERSAL VALUE SYSTEM*

Whether people frame their views in terms of God, the scriptures of their own or another religion, or simply the values they’ve discovered on their own, it is noteworthy that many of them state or imply that they’re “slowly becoming aware of the values that are real to me and the importance of respecting them rather than superimposing some value that I may have heard or read.” Or, as another put it, “I am far more

aware of my own morality—what is right or wrong for me—and act according to this, naturally.”

What matters is that these values come from the heart, from the experience of living. As one person said, “It is a joy to live with what little purity I have been fortunate enough to attain and to know that there is ever more to come.”

A young man told me, “Since beginning meditation, my religious, philosophical, spiritual, and personal values have developed far beyond my most distant expectations. They have evolved to a deeply spiritual, powerful set of values. A belief has flowered that all creation is steadily evolving to one common goal. The essence of this goal is pure, eternal bliss, total eternal energy, complete harmony, supreme enlightenment, final union with God. The one steady component at the base of this goal is the glorious quality of love.”

These striking personal expressions suggest an inspiring conclusion: The global breakdown of commonly accepted values that I alluded to in the beginning of this chapter may be giving way to a new shared perception of what is important and how to design a meaningful life based on that understanding.

From the perspective of Maharishi’s Vedic Science, growth of consciousness toward enlightenment is the highest priority for any individual. As Maharishi phrased it, “The whole purpose of life is to gain enlightenment. Nothing else is significant compared to that completely natural, exalted state of consciousness. So always strive for that. Set your life

around that goal. Don't get caught up in small things, and then it will be yours.”

As people grow in insight and compassion, hearts will expand in love and intellects will become more incisive. And as the large groups of meditators throughout the world (whom we'll visit in the final chapter) quietly dissipate environmental stress and radiate coherence into the collective consciousness, solutions will be found to seemingly intractable problems, and life-supporting values will steadily overtake and replace negativity.

Dostoyevsky, the great Russian novelist, wrote in *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*:

I have seen and I know that people can be beautiful and happy without losing the power of living on earth. I will not and cannot believe that evil is the normal condition of mankind.

How simple it is: in one day, *in one hour* everything could be arranged at once! The chief thing is to love others like yourself, that's the great thing, and that's everything; nothing else is wanted.... It's an old truth which has been told and retold a billion times—but it has not formed part of our lives! ... If only everyone wants it, it can be arranged at once.

I believe humanity has reached a point in time when more and more of us do indeed want it: that love, that mutual caring. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and other components of our information age have allowed many millions of people, more than ever before, to see the dead end of war and hate, greed, pollution, and waste, and we are hungry for change. Maharishi saw this happening. He believed that the

transformation of consciousness that so many people around the world are undergoing would lead to a broader and more penetrating understanding. Then, because action is based on thought, behavior would change, and this dynamic unfolding of higher values of life would lead inevitably to what he called an Age of Enlightenment.







## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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### RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

#### *THE PURPOSE OF RELIGION*

The word *religion*, according to noted scholar Joseph Campbell, is derived from the Latin root “re-ligare,” meaning “to connect or reconnect, to bind or bind back.” In *Science of Being and Art of Living*, Maharishi used exactly the same language when he stated: “The purpose of religion is to bind man back to his source, to his origin.”

From the perspective of Maharishi’s Vedic Science, the “source” of human life—indeed, of all life in the universe and of the universe itself—is what he variously called *Being, the Unified Field, pure existence, pure consciousness, creative intelligence, the total potential of Natural Law*—very much like terms that have long been ascribed to God, such as *the One, the creator, the self-existent, the source of our being*.

To connect or reconnect to this mighty source would accomplish what Maharishi saw as the purpose of religion: to set individual life in harmony with all the laws of nature so that every thought, word, and action naturally flows in the stream of evolution and upholds the life and progress of all beings. This is the highest form of service, the highest form of “love thy neighbor”—innocently supporting all of life by every impulse of one’s mind and heart. Every religion aspires

to raise its followers to this high peak where the divine and the human meet.

*“The fulfillment of all the knowledge of theology must be to lead every individual to live the light of God ... which is very naturally and spontaneously gained through the practice of Transcendental Meditation.”*

— MAHARISHI

Religion, Maharishi said, should do far more than lay out guidelines of right and wrong; “to fulfill its purpose it should elevate man to a state of life where he will choose only that which is right and will by nature avoid that which is wrong.” Provocatively, he stated that “the true spirit of religion is lacking if it ... creates the fear of punishment and hell and the fear of God in the minds of men.” Rather, “the purpose of religion should be to take away all fear.”<sup>1</sup>

Maharishi’s vision of a healthy, functioning, useful religion is profound and exalted. Here are a few snippets from his writings just to whet your appetite:

- “Religion is a way, or at least should be a way, to raise the consciousness of man to the level of God-consciousness and the human mind to the level of divine intelligence or universal cosmic mind.”<sup>2</sup>
- “A man belonging to any religion should have no place in his life for suffering, tension, immorality, vice, sinful thought, speech, or action. None of these negative aspects of life should exist for a man following religion.”<sup>3</sup>

- “A religious life should be one lived in bliss, joyfulness, peace, harmony, creativity, and intelligence.... It should be a life of love, kindness, and tolerance with an innate desire to help one’s fellow men.... If these qualities together with the state of God-consciousness are not naturally found in a religious man, then the name of his religion is only a burden to him.”<sup>4</sup>

Please note that Maharishi’s use of the word *should* in these passages simply refers to how he thought people would spontaneously function if the goals of their religious life were fulfilled. He was well aware that religions today fall short of achieving these goals because they have not provided their followers with adequate tools for spiritual unfoldment.

“A religion which brings to its people a message to do good but which fails to develop their consciousness or to raise them to live naturally a good life is a religion merely of words,” he said. If people are not given what they need in order to live such a naturally good life in the light of God, then the religious preachers and teachers, who stand as a link between humanity and the divine, “should renew their strength and do justice to their teachings.”<sup>5</sup>

Almost exactly 40 years after writing those words, responding to a journalist’s question about what religion needed in order to be more effective, Maharishi immediately brought up the same point: “The preachers of religion have to practice their religion.”

The knowledge is there, he said; “the religious books contain the value of the transcendental, unmanifest reality.” Traditionally, religion has been “a direct way for raising life

to perfection.” The science of consciousness, he added, Vedic wisdom, “is also a way of unfolding the knowledge of that reality which is transcendental, which is the light of God, at the basis of all creation.” This knowledge will make a person “competent to be a perfect human being,” one who can embody and express “in a very natural way, the cosmic intelligence of Natural Law, the will of God, the Unified Field—self-referral consciousness—in the field of thought, speech, behavior, and action.”<sup>6</sup>

### *THE CONDITION OF RELIGION TODAY*

Such knowledge is surely needed. Every week in every neighborhood around the world, tens of thousands of spiritual leaders stand before their congregations. People of good will, often with a felt calling, an experience of the divine, and a desire to serve, they offer the accumulated wisdom of their traditions. And yet despite their good intentions, it seems that mainstream religion in our time is a sinking ship. On the individual level, it has so often failed to bring fulfillment to the spiritual hunger of its followers that millions have jumped overboard, seeking spiritual development elsewhere.

Sometimes that “elsewhere” is the more inward or contemplative wing of the religions themselves, such as Kabbalah in Judaism and Sufism in Islam, the meditation practices of Tibetan Buddhism, or the writings and teachings of the great Christian mystics. But in general and on an institutional level, the dominant religious traditions seem to have little to offer anyone seeking deep spiritual experience.

Even Hinduism, which many Western seekers revere for its profound Upanishadic wisdom and its ages-old lineages of

meditation and yoga, in actual practice is often found lacking in depth. While some congregants and parishioners appear to be content with the social contacts, the sermons, the familiar rituals, and the rules of behavior of their religions, many others craving for more—the Water of Life, authentic spiritual nourishment—have abandoned the faiths of their birth in search of meaningful contact with the divine reality. They believe there *is* such a thing, and many have had intimations of a glory beyond the ordinary. But their religious communities have not opened the doors to that Kingdom.

### *TM AND THE FULFILLMENT OF RELIGION*

Transcendence, going beyond the limitations of the material world by allowing one's awareness to open to unboundedness, is central to every religion. Supplementing current religious teachings and practices with this experience would provide—and is providing—the missing nourishment, the access to the divine reality, that is often lacking in the lives of religious people. The fulfillment of every religion, regardless of its outer structure, lies in making the experience of Being, that abstract, unmanifest, pure consciousness—available to each person.

“Religion aims at the unfoldment of the light of God, that the light of God be lived,” Maharishi said. “Whatever the conception of God ... almost all religions have one common ground, that the light of God is kindled in each heart: Go within and find it and live it in the world.”<sup>7</sup>

This precious experience, vital to every individual of every religion, has not only been long forgotten or ignored, it has been actively dismissed by many religious leaders and

classified as “mystical,” a term that until recently was used almost entirely in a derogatory sense. Paradoxically, those who find their way to it are often later recognized as saints or spiritual heroes. Throughout history, as well as in our own time, many have reported moments of awakening, of unexpected insight, of bliss, and an expanded and spacious mind—moments when the light of God suddenly appeared.

Thanks to Maharishi and his Vedic Science, we no longer have to rely on chance or luck to stumble on this experience; a way to achieve it on a regular basis, and to culture mind and body to permanently sustain pure consciousness or the light of God has been formulated as a *science* that provides intellectual understanding as well as a systematic technology for repeatability. As Maharishi was fond of saying, it took a scientific age for this knowledge to be brought out in a way that could reach everyone in the world.

“The growth of scientific thinking in the present generation has brought Being to the level of scientific study and scrutiny,” he wrote in 1963. “As physics continues to explore the finer strata of these finer particles, it is bound to strike against the unmanifested aspect of existence which lies beyond the subtlest aspect of an energy particle—the field of Being. This is how science is certain to declare Being a scientific reality. It is only a matter of time.”<sup>8</sup> Recent Superstring and Unified Field theories certainly support his prediction.

The TM technique is an effective way to open one’s awareness to what is often described as “the light of God present within.” It offers a common platform of direct experience, beyond any doctrinal differences, on which all

religions can meet. It's part of our design as human beings to have a highly developed nervous system, capable of expansive, cosmic awareness. We are able to have this life-transforming experience just by being who we are—a naturally seeking mind and an eternally fulfilled inner core of bliss—and allowing those two aspects of our being to integrate and unite.

### *DO'S AND DON'TS*

The “do's and don'ts” that have a place in every religion are, Maharishi suggested, “green and red lights on the highway of life.” The purpose of these traditional codes of conduct, he said, is to safeguard us from making mistakes and thereby causing unhappiness or suffering for ourselves and others. They are designed to structure a way of life such that by all that we do, “we are proceeding toward the light of God.” By proposing guidelines—what to eat, how to speak and act toward one another, and so on—religions aim to set up conditions so that “the whole stream of life is moving toward the light of God, and the light of God becomes a living reality.”

The hundreds of biblical commandments that orthodox Jews are expected to follow, the many rules Buddhist monks must obey, as well as the ethical and practical guidelines prescribed by all religions, are meant for liberation, not imprisonment. As a river flows peacefully and powerfully between its banks but can cause havoc and destruction when it breaks out of them, so religions prescribe boundaries designed to channel our energies in evolutionary ways, guide our lives past the boulders and whitewater rapids, and help us attain the high purpose of human existence.

Ideally, scriptural *prescriptions* and *proscriptions* are born of the experience and insight of the wise. They are founded on a broad perspective of life, and tell us to look beyond the moment to its consequences and implications. One whose vision is deep enough and broad enough can see the results in the action, the tree inherent in the seed. There may be nothing intrinsically wrong with eating an extra-large pizza and half a gallon of ice cream for dinner—it's all so delicious and satisfying!—but it is the consequences that need to be considered. So it is with many actions we perform, that may be positive and life-supporting in certain contexts, innocent and neutral in others, but harmful and damaging in still others.

As you and I learn from our own experiences, and as parents and teachers attempt to pass on what they have learned about how life works, so the writings of the sages are based on their insights and the collective wisdom and experience of the race. Even in our highly individualistic culture, each of us, being limited in understanding, perspective, and experience, would do well to consider the traditional wisdom drawn from age-old sources.

However, these do's and don'ts, no matter how wise or well intentioned, have not been sufficient. The scriptures have existed for generations, but the number of people who have been able to live the life enjoined by the scriptures is small. We act to the best of our ability, but mistakes are common. Life is experienced as a struggle, and people have come to accept that “to err is human,” rather than striving to live up to the great challenge posed by Jesus, who obviously thought we were capable of it: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.”<sup>9</sup>



The descriptions of wise, righteous, and enlightened lives contained in the world's scriptures are not intended to frustrate us or to stand as impossible ideals or far-off goals; rather, they are meant to inspire us to build our own lives to reflect those high values. But without a systematic means to purify our physiology and integrate within our awareness the inner pure consciousness that is the home of all the laws of nature, our spiritual development has lagged behind our understanding, and our spiritual values have not been fully lived.

As our comprehension grows and our perspective expands—the result of a settled, uncluttered mind and the blossoming of unbounded awareness—our ability to act wisely increases. In the state that Maharishi has called Cosmic Consciousness, we are no longer bound into partial vision and partial ability to act rightly, for our individual intelligence operates with the breadth and genius of the universal intelligence that organizes the entire creation. The same pure intelligence, the same invincible force of evolution that conducts the destiny of the entire universe and carries out all the activities of nature faultlessly and gracefully, also choreographs the dance of our lives. Only good, Maharishi often said, can come from one whose mind is in attunement with the Cosmic Mind, the total potential of Natural Law.

Understanding the laws of right behavior, memorization of the laws, intention to follow the laws—none of that makes a person capable of following them, whereas enlightenment does. Here, Maharishi's explanation of true knowledge as consisting of two parts, intellectual understanding plus direct experience, is invaluable. Understanding alone is not enough. Education of the intellect, and the teaching of precepts and

concepts, is not enough. The intent of Jesus and other great founders, reformers, and prophets in every religious tradition has been to show that the legalistic structure of morality is not sufficient either to properly guide society or to do justice to our innate human capacities.

“I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,” the prophet Jeremiah heard God say. “And they will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.”<sup>10</sup>

The essence of every great religious and ethical teacher’s message has been the inner transformation of the individual—any individual who desires it, from the “least” to the “greatest”—to live on a higher plane of life.

It was always Maharishi’s stance that the TM program, as well as his Vedic Science, are not a religion, as I’ll discuss in a moment. Thus, he declined to set up the kind of rules for living that are the province of all the religious traditions. When asked for behavior guidelines, he often said, “You know these things from your religion.” He was quietly insistent that the experience of transcending, and the resultant refinement of mind and body, would enable people to live higher values in a natural way. “It is much easier,” he said, “to raise man’s consciousness than to get him to act righteously.”<sup>11</sup>

### *RELIGION AND SCIENCE*

Many people believe that in some fundamental way, religion and science are opposed to one another, so if you accept the

principles or tenets of one, you cannot give credence to the other. Certainly there are differences, but essentially they are simply two different ways in which we human beings perceive and evaluate our common reality in our attempt to understand and come to terms with it.

Some have said that science does not tackle the big questions such as “Who are we?” “Where do we come from?” and “Where are we going,”—in short, “What’s it all about?” Erwin Schrödinger, the Nobel Prize–winning physicist who was one of the founders of Quantum Mechanics, wrote:

The scientific picture of the real world around me is very deficient. It gives a lot of factual information, puts all our experience in a magnificently consistent order, but it is ... silent about all ... that is really near to our heart, that really matters to us.... The scientific world-view contains of itself no ethical values, no aesthetical values, not a word about our own ultimate scope or destination, and no God.... Science is reticent too when it is a question of the great Unity ... of which we all somehow form part, to which we belong.... Whence come I and whither go I? That is the great unfathomable question, the same for every one of us. Science has no answer to it.<sup>12</sup>

Religion does attempt to answer such questions, but doesn’t science? Perhaps the average working scientist, focused on one small part of the physical or biological world, does not concern him- or herself with such issues. But Science itself certainly does. In the words of contemporary physicist Stephen Hawking: “Our goal is a complete understanding of the events around us, and of our own existence.”<sup>13</sup>

Even Schrödinger, contradicting later in life his own remark that science does not attempt to answer the “big questions,” said that he considered science “part of our endeavour to answer the one great philosophical question which embraces all others ... who are we? And more than that: I consider this not only one of the tasks, but *the* task, of science, the only one that really counts.”<sup>14</sup>

From his earliest teachings in the 1950s, Maharishi seemed intent on bridging the apparent gap between religion and science, revealing their common goals (understanding life and making it better) and their common source, which, as we have seen, he spoke of in terms of the Unified Field and yet was equally at home speaking of it as God: “... the value which the world has been singing as the glory of God, the light of God, from the religious point of view, and now recently in terms of the Unified Field or Quantum Field.”<sup>15</sup>

Before him, both Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda had spoken of the complementary nature of religion and science in the early part of the 20th century, and some of the visionary founders of Quantum Mechanics had also glimpsed it, but it wasn't until the late 1960s that books began to appear from creative scientific minds comparing and meshing the insights of religion and science, especially in the world of fine particle physics.

The knowledge that comprises Maharishi's Vedic Science, like the laws and principles of science, has been attained empirically, by observation and experiment, only these are experiments and observations in the domain of *consciousness*. Rather than asking us to accept its principles on faith, Vedic Science challenges us to conduct what might be called

“research in consciousness,” in order to verify or disprove its assertions. This is the scientific method. True, the experiences are subjective and take place in the laboratory of one’s own mind, rather than with computers, test tubes, and particle accelerators; but they are experiments nonetheless, utilizing a systematic procedure that anyone can follow, and then observe and evaluate the results.

So, if you doubt any of the principles Maharishi laid out, his invitation is there for you: *Come on, try it, see what happens. Experiment, and observe.* He always encouraged that attitude not only in the millions of people who learned the practice, but in experimental scientists as well. *Test! Measure! See what you find!*

It is this attitude, and the very important corollary that there is something to find and verify—the large number of physiological, neurophysiological, and psychological benefits—that makes Maharishi’s teachings scientific.

And just as any science has its theoretical side—the laws and principles it discovers and describes—it also has its practical, applied aspect. So it is with Vedic Science and the Transcendental Meditation technique, which Maharishi, with his scientific background, delighted in calling by the completely nonmystical, nonpoetic term: *technology*.

*“I have been a meditator for about 12 years. It has given me energy, strength, health, wisdom, and access to my own inner stillness, inner silence, inner bliss. It is my connection to myself; it is my connection to the universe.”<sup>16</sup>*

— RUSSELL SIMMONS

## *IS TM A RELIGION?*

Religion as we know it today is a branch of human thought and action, a part of human life. It is that branch pertaining to “systems of belief and practice,” as one scholar of world religions phrased it.<sup>17</sup> The modern world has taken religion out of the center; it is no longer at the hub of the wheel, connected to every spoke. It does not govern every phase of our actions and interactions as it may have in the Middle Ages, for example, or as it may still do for the very devoted, “orthodox” religious or those few remaining indigenous peoples who innocently perceive divinity everywhere and thus treat all objects and actions as sacred. Most of us today do not see the divine everywhere; we live in a secular world in which one of the pigeonholes is called “religion.”

Religions typically consist of certain elements, including:

- Faith in a divinity
- Ritualized ceremonies
- Authoritative scriptures
- Dogma or a systematized set of beliefs
- Moral dictates or codes of conduct

Looking closely at the TM program, we can see that of all these elements, only one is even partially visible. No *faith* is required for the benefits of TM practice to accrue, nor is any faith in God (or Maharishi) asked of anyone participating in the program.

The only ritual is the five-minute ceremony performed by the teacher before instructing someone in the technique, a traditional ceremony expressing gratitude to those who have passed on the knowledge. This brief, one-time performance is an entirely different matter from the many repeated ceremonies such as mass, holy communion, prostrations, prayers, chants, and so on found in the world's religions.

As far as *scriptures* are concerned, Maharishi repeatedly asserted that all the great religions contain the truth of life, if one has the proper state of consciousness to see it.

There is, admittedly, *a system of ideas*—but not beliefs—in Maharishi's Vedic Science. (TM, as simply a *technique*, cannot have “ideas” any more than casting a fishing line or driving a car has ideas: it is simply a methodology, a way of doing something.) The same is true for physics, chemistry, music, architecture, and every discipline. One may argue that the ideas in Vedic Science are presented as truth, and that here, Vedic Science most resembles religion, which typically presents its ideas as truth. But what discipline presents its core principles as false? Maharishi was adamant from the beginning that the ideas he put forth in his Vedic Science are, as in any science, principles that can be validated or refuted, based on direct observation and experience, and are not to be adopted on the basis of faith.

Finally, the closest Maharishi ever came to prescribing a set of *do's and don'ts* was to urge his students to “do what you know is right, and don't do what you know is not right.” For those who looked to him to provide ethical guidelines beyond this, he would suggest following the guidance of elders, who have had more experience of life, or looking in the scriptures

of one's own religion. Otherwise, his essential teaching in the ethical sphere was: *Raise your level of consciousness, get into attunement with the total potential of Natural Law, and your actions will spontaneously be morally good, upheld by the force of evolution and supportive to all life.*

Maharishi's teachings do have a deep kinship with the inner heart of every religion, the realm of direct experience. TM provides the vertical dimension upon which all religions must be based if they are to fulfill their intent of connecting practitioners to God, the supreme intelligence of the universe. Direct personal experience of spiritual reality is the essence and heart of religion. Without it, the horizontal or institutional structures, the ceremonies, scriptures, buildings, priesthoods, dogma, and ethical injunctions, are without substance. They are the body of religion; without the interior experience of Being or pure consciousness, the life or spirit that animates the body is lacking. Because Transcendental Meditation provides this spiritual experience, it is, as Maharishi liked to say, a friend and support to every religion and every religious seeker.

And it is upon this base that all the fine qualities universally regarded as spiritual can be built. Love, compassion, kindness, generosity of spirit, caring for the sick and the orphaned, tending to the physically and emotionally wounded, the effort to be honest and fair in all one's dealings—all such ways of being can only be spontaneous and genuine if they arise from an open heart and an expanded awareness that can see beyond one's personal needs and desires in order to serve the needs of others. A physiology burdened with accumulated stress breeds fear, self-centeredness, and a grasping for power and material



possessions. As the stresses go, behavior rises toward the ethical ideals taught by all the great religious traditions. In one of my favorite lines from Maharishi's commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, he writes of the enlightened individual: "Having risen above the egocentricity and selfishness of individuality, abiding in bliss-consciousness and fully connected with the source of energy, a man can but move about compassionately doing good to all beings."<sup>18</sup>

### *A FRIEND TO ALL RELIGIONS*

The broad acceptance and embrace of TM by men and women of every major faith attests to the truth of Maharishi's contention that TM is a friend to all religions. In this section, I'll share a selection of remarks I've collected from clergy, spiritual leaders, and devout practitioners of the world's great religious traditions about how TM deepens and strengthens their practice and helps make the precepts of their own religion a living reality.

"The first thing I want to say about my 40-year practice of the TM program is that I would never have become a rabbi without it," said Alan Green, senior rabbi of the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue in Winnipeg, Canada. "Transcendental Meditation gave me an experiential referent for the word 'God.' Based on my own developing experiences with TM, I grew in love and appreciation for God, for His amazing universe, and for my own religious traditions."

In a 2010 blog post on "Catholicism and Transcendental Meditation," author and political commentator Andrew Sullivan wrote:

Over the last year or so, I've been practicing Transcendental Meditation. I don't consider this in any way a contradiction of my faith in Christ; in fact, I think it has helped me pray more deeply and helped me get closer to the "being with God" that prayer is really all about.... I find meditation a very useful prelude to a more traditional mode of prayer.... It can center you and then allow you to focus more deeply on, say, the Lord's Prayer, or the Hail Mary, or a scriptural passage. Getting to Mass a little early to practice meditation before the service begins is also something that has helped me focus on the eternal in this constantly ephemeral and over-charged modern present.<sup>19</sup>

Although many Buddhists have their own modes of meditation, some have discovered TM and have found it very helpful. A Thai Buddhist, B. Budhacharan, noted that "in just a few minutes each day, one begins to unfold deeper appreciation for the eternal laws of nature that promote bliss and unity in life. I must say that the clarity, purity, and ability to get to the heart of spiritual knowledge and experience the inner light of life directly, is Maharishi's gift to everyone. And to achieve this deepest knowledge and experience of the divine unity of life is the aim of all religions."

More than 3,000 Buddhist monks in 100 monasteries throughout Southeast Asia have learned the Transcendental Meditation technique, partly as a result of the work of a Japanese Buddhist monk, Reverend Koji Oshima, who is a longtime TM practitioner.

According to Reverend Oshima, the monks appreciate the simplicity, effortlessness, and profound experience of transcendence, which "provides the natural basis for the

monks' subsequent prayers and practices.” Reverend Oshima said that the younger monks are especially inspired by Maharishi’s integration of modern and ancient knowledge: “They were particularly interested in how the Unified Field of Natural Law, as described by modern quantum physics, is experienced directly during TM practice as the field of transcendental consciousness, the field of Absolute Being.”

Over the years, many Catholic clergy have learned TM and have found that it has deepened their spiritual experience. Father Cletus Stein, now retired from “active duty” as a priest, said that he practiced Transcendental Meditation while he “served in the Catholic Church for about 30 years. TM is a universal technique that is in harmony with the goals of our religion. It requires no change in personal lifestyle or beliefs and is an effective aid for us to become stronger in our own faith.” Meditation, Father Cletus pointed out, “has been encouraged by the Church over the ages and by the saints, including the writer of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and many others. TM is a proven technique for joining them in meditation.”

Sister Carol Wirtz, a member of the Sisters of Charity, lives in Anthony, New Mexico. She is the co-founder of the Santo Niño Project in nearby Anapra, Mexico, a program for children with special needs. “I have been a Catholic Sister for 22 years and have been practicing Transcendental Meditation for 14 years. It has helped calm and focus my mind during times of stress as well as in everyday life.... In my years of practicing this technique, I believe it has enhanced my prayer and Christian life.”

When Don Lansky learned TM in 1970, he says today, “I was an avowed agnostic.” But over the years of practicing TM, “I found myself growing into a greater awareness of something much larger than myself.... This awareness continued to blossom into a deep appreciation and gratitude for the Creator—and a profound and abiding love of Jesus Christ.... The TM program has not only served to strengthen my faith in God, it has also deepened my prayer life.” From his nonreligious beginnings, Lansky is now co-minister (along with his wife, Patricia) of Unity Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, and says that TM has helped with his career as well. “I cannot imagine doing ministry without my twice-a-day TM practice. The deep rest and silence of the TM technique helps me to find balance, energy, and the spiritual connection to cope with the rigorous demands and stresses of ministry. In short, I am a better minister because of the TM program.”

Miral Shaaban of Cairo, Egypt, describes herself as “a veiled Muslim who practices Transcendental Meditation.” She was completely taken with TM from the start. “I cannot ever forget the first time I prayed after my first meditation. I was speechless and could not explain this state of complete serenity, contentment and gratitude to God.”

TM, she said, “has increased my level of acceptance and appreciation for my faith and strengthened my beliefs. During meditation I feel unlimited within myself and after I practice it, when I perform my religious practices, the whole experience becomes deeper and more spiritual. For example, reading from the Qur’an is becoming more enjoyable and comforting, as now I can better link its teachings with everything around me. I’m feeling more in harmony with

God's creation and desiring to help society in every way I can."

Dr. Atmane Kouider of Algiers, Algeria, learned TM in 1973, became a TM teacher in 1977, and has taught the technique to "thousands of Muslims in North Africa and Asia." A practicing Muslim, Kouider reported that "four generations in our home have been practicing the TM technique along with doing our Muslim rituals every day."

Meditation, he said, "raises love and respect for everything in God's creation. It develops in individuals all the highest qualities of the Muslim faith: positivity, compassion, tolerance, steadfastness, purity, surrender to the will of God, and usefulness to oneself and to all others."

A TM practitioner since the age of 17 (he is now 55), Rabbi Michael Shevack is a former Madison Avenue creative director, and is active in interreligious dialogue around the world. Through his TM practice, he said, "I found that I was opening, day after day, meditation after meditation, to what I considered to be a deep spiritual experience.... TM opened me up to intuitive insights and understandings which helped make sense of my Jewish practice; it made the observance of my own faith increasingly alive and spiritually vibrant."

### *GOD*

Followers of the three great monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), share the conception of God as a personal being, all-knowing and all-powerful, who creates the world and takes an ongoing, historical interest in it—especially in the human race. This personal God knows,

loves, and also judges his creatures according to the ethical standards laid down in the scriptures.

As strange as it may seem to people steeped in one of these three traditions, this concept of God is quite foreign to millions of people who follow religions that do not worship or even conceive of a personal God. The great Taoist texts, for example, speak of the Tao or Way, which is the ultimate, transcendent ground of existence, “behind all and beneath all, the womb from which all life springs,”<sup>20</sup> an impersonal (or nonpersonal) reality that has little in common with the personal God of the monotheistic religions.

In its characteristically all-embracing vision, the Vedic tradition includes both the personal and the impersonal aspects of God. Maharishi discussed them both.

**Impersonal God.** The impersonal aspect of God is omnipresent and unmanifest, absolute, eternal, and unchanging. Transcendental in nature (that is, beyond the ability of the senses to perceive), the impersonal God underlies and gives rise to the entire relative, ever-changing world.

According to Maharishi, “It is the fountainhead of all the different forms and phenomena of creation. All the attributes of relative existence have their source in the attributeless, absolute Being.”<sup>21</sup> The ultimate reality of life, “it is life eternal and knows no change,” it is the “source, the be-all and the end-all of the entire creation,” the creator and sustainer of the world. “It is through the power of the impersonal God that the world was, is, and will be.”<sup>22</sup>

Eternally One, it appears as many. All the ever-changing phenomena throughout creation are “grounded in never-changing, eternal, absolute Being.”<sup>23</sup> It is their source and their essential nature. All beings have their life in It; there is no life apart from the “impersonal, absolute, eternal God, the Almighty.”

As Maharishi said, “Since It is the very basis of all creation, naturally all beings dwell in It, their ever-changing existence having their basis in unchanging, unchangeable, eternal Being.”<sup>24</sup>

If you sense that these definitions are only slightly different from how modern physics defines the Unified Field, you would be correct. As I understand it, the impersonal aspect of God and the Unified Field are essentially the same reality, seen from a different cultural/linguistic construct or framework.

Thousands of cultures have arisen and vanished on this planet, and they all had their words to refer to *earth*, *fire*, *water*, and *sky*. Religions have used words to point to the underlying reality, the “higher power,” the “Supreme Being,” the One who is all-powerful and possesses infinite intelligence, who is invisible and transcendent yet creates the world. Today, in our scientific framework, we see the same nonmaterial reality, looming beyond the objects of the physical universe, yet giving birth to all phenomena, and we call it “energy” or the “Unified Field.” What’s important is not so much the name or the cultural framework through which we see it, but that it is real, and to get in attunement with it—whether we call that adhering to the will of God or

living in accord with the natural laws of the universe—is the key to everything good for ourselves and our world.

The impersonal God is the Being that dwells in the heart of everyone. Because God, in the impersonal, absolute phase, is the Being of all, to actually realize God, to experience God, should not be difficult; it simply requires “arriving at one’s own Being,” at the source of our existence.

If you asked a wave in the sea, “What are you?” it might respond, “I’m just me, just a little wave,” but the truth is, it is, and can only be, the ocean. Okay, not the *whole* ocean. But its form as a wave is just a temporary appearance, a momentary shape that has no independent, separate existence. It is made of the ocean, it rises up from the ocean and falls back into the ocean, and even while it is enjoying its waviness, it remains nothing other than ocean. If the Unified Field, or Being, the impersonal God, is the ground of being, the Source, the essential constituent of all, then, insofar as I exist, I am a wave of that great sea of Being. I am, as you are, fully and wholly *that*—what else could we be?

Thus we run into one of the most well-known phrases in the entire Vedic tradition that sums up this great truth: “I am That, thou art That, all this is nothing but That. That alone is.”

**Personal God.** The personal aspect of God, Maharishi has explained, is not an “It,” but “can only be ‘He’ or ‘She.’” As opposed to the impersonal transcendental Being, the personal God has “a specific form, a specific nature, certain attributes and certain qualities,” including the ability to “command the entire existence of the cosmos.” In order to be able to command the entire cosmos, the personal God must be



abiding and operating at the highest or subtlest level of creation.

To understand this, I find it helpful to look at the Unified Field diagram introduced in [Chapter 4](#), showing the structure of creation from the most minute and tiny to the most solid and manifest levels. This diagram makes it clear that if there is a Supreme Being, the Lord of the universe, He or She must be able to act upon matter and energy from the deepest causal level. This is the area from where a tiny impulse in the finest strata of rarefied existence will reverberate or take effect on any other level, in exactly the same way that producing an influence on the atomic level, or manipulating the DNA, would automatically produce changes on more expressed levels.

Maharishi's descriptions of the personal God are in every way consistent with the reports and portrayals handed down by the guiding spiritual lights of humanity over the millennia: "On the highest level of evolution is He whose power, joyfulness, intelligence, and energy are unlimited," he wrote. "All-knowing is He, all-powerful is He, all-blissful is He, almighty is He.... All the laws of nature are controlled by His will."<sup>25</sup> When it is said that God is almighty, Maharishi commented, we mean "having the power to do, be, and understand everything."

If this is not enough of a mind-blowing description, Maharishi added (in words that echo and support the teachings of the great monotheistic religions) that the personal God pays attention to every individual and responds to every prayer: "All the innumerable decisions that are the apparent results of

natural laws ... are the innumerable decisions of the almighty, personal, supreme God at the head of creation.”<sup>26</sup>

### *PRAYER*

Maharishi was unambiguous about the central role of prayer in religious life. “Prayer,” he said, “is *always* the path to God realization.” But he emphasized that prayer can be on different levels, some more effective than others. You can ride a bicycle toward your destination or, to go faster, you can drive a car down the same road. Prayer from the verbal, spoken level, has some effect—it’s the bicycle mode, you’ll get there eventually—but prayer from the mental level has greater effectiveness; “it’s a much finer”—thus a more powerful—“field of experience.”

Silent prayer on the transcendental level—the all-pervading field of pure consciousness, or what physicists sometimes speak of as “infinite correlation”—will be most effective. Prayer from the transcendental area, Maharishi said, “has the maximum effect, because that is a field of frictionless flow.” Any impulse from that level “is penetrating; it travels throughout nature, throughout the universe.” Prayer from the transcendental level “is instantly heard, and instantly responded to. So, it depends on from what level one projects one’s prayers to God.”<sup>27</sup>

### *VEDIC SCIENCE AND THE UNITY OF WORLD RELIGIONS*

Many scholars have proposed that there is an essential unity among the world’s religions, that the same universal truths of life can be found in the scriptures and the writings of the

saints of all the great traditions. But religions, even though they teach fundamental, common truths, necessarily express them through their own cultural traditions and values, in their own language. This makes them valuable as a highway for rapid evolution for the people in that tradition, but it is also what robs them of universality.

“Every religion is a blend of universal principles and local setting,” Huston Smith said.<sup>28</sup> Abraham Maslow had the same insight:

All religions are the same in their essence and have always been the same. They should, therefore, come to agree in principle on teaching that which is common to all of them.... This something common, this something which is left over after we peel away all the localisms, all the accidents of particular languages or particular philosophies, all the ethnocentric phrasings ... we may call the “core-religious experience” or the “transcendent experience.”<sup>29</sup>

In a doctoral study undertaken “to explore the possibility that underlying the obvious differences on the surface level” of the three great western religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—“there may be a deeper level of both principle and practice that unifies them,” Dr. Evan Finkelstein uncovered dozens of striking parallels. He noted that throughout history, “when the experience of differentiation is uppermost in the consciousness of humankind, then fear, mistrust, hatred, and war” are frequently the result.

A scholar of religion and lover of peace, his research was motivated by the notion that “if this underlying common ground could be both understood and experienced, then the

differences among these traditions would not predominate in the consciousness of their adherents.” Rather, “the common ground, the experience of unity and harmony, could naturally take precedence.”<sup>30</sup>

By serving as a nourishing support to all religions, Maharishi’s Vedic Science brings us closer to the day when peace may prevail on our beautiful, beleaguered planet. The attempt to establish harmony among the world’s religions by convening interfaith councils, discussing common principles, and getting together with people of other faiths and cultures is certainly worthwhile and good. But what will ultimately create the much-desired mutual acceptance and appreciation is sharing the deep experience of oneness and wholeness that is our essential nature and common heritage. This is the light of God that sparked the founding of all religions and that continues to shine in the semi-darkness shrouding all religions today, waiting to be revealed in full glory in our awareness and in our actions.

“Man is made in the image of God,” Maharishi said, “whether he lives on the top of the Himalayas or at the bottom of the sea. Wherever a man is, he is the light of God. An American, a Japanese, a Chinese, an Indian, a Russian, a German—wherever man is, he is the expression of the light of God.”<sup>31</sup> As the inner spiritual reality is enlivened in all religions, and their common purpose is fulfilled by drawing strength from their common source, their light will shine more brightly, the integrity of each of the world’s religions will be enhanced, and their unity will be ensured.

*A SCIENCE OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT*

One of Maharishi's greatest contributions to the future of humanity, the progress of science, and the aspirations of countless spiritual seekers, is summed up in his statement: "The story of spiritual development is the reality of the transformation of brain functioning." From the earliest days of his teaching work, he emphasized that the path to enlightenment is not merely a product of reading or thinking, of faith or belief; rather, growth of consciousness involves physiological purification and transformation. The body, especially the brain, must learn to function in a new way.

Maharishi started talking about the neurophysiological basis of enlightenment in the 1960s, and those of us who were not around then may not realize how radical a departure it was from conventional views of spirituality. I do not think you could find any references in the literature on spiritual development before the '60s that discuss spiritual growth in terms of the transformation of the brain and nervous system, with the possible exception of a few yoga teachers. In those days, the path to spiritual growth was understood to be prayer, engaging in good works, loving our neighbor, and studying the scriptures. These are all good things, to be sure, but—what about our brain, which structures our experience, our understanding, and our level of consciousness? Following Maharishi's revolutionary lead, the discussion is very different today.

We now know that the material of the brain is constantly changing. As discussed in the chapter on education, leading-edge research on neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to revamp existing neural pathways and build new ones—has made it clear that the activities and interconnections of the neurons in our brains are changing all the time, and these

changes correspond to constant subtle shifts in consciousness. By working with this ever-evolving landscape of our inner awareness and its material counterpart in the nervous system, it becomes possible to transform and expand consciousness from boundaries to its unbounded value. Instead of being always caught up in the perception of limited objects (whether thoughts or external objects), we become capable of opening our awareness to the limitless expanse of pure consciousness that is our own essential nature.

Enlightenment, Dr. Keith Wallace told the 26th International Congress of Physiological Sciences in October 1974, is “the ultimate development of what we ordinarily consider to be the most valuable qualities of human life. It is something real, natural and tangible and develops systematically in a continuous and progressive manner, on the basis of neurophysiological refinement or purification.”

The paper Wallace presented, “The Neurophysiology of Enlightenment,” emphasized that “enlightenment results from the full development of consciousness and depends upon the perfect and harmonious functioning of every part of the body.”

The key is to repeatedly set the activity of the brain in the direction of producing expanded consciousness. This is done by lowering our “mental temperature,” allowing the mind to settle down to a state of least excitation or perfect orderliness, the fourth state of consciousness. Eventually the integrated style of functioning of the brain that produces pure, unbounded awareness becomes stabilized, and the brain operates at all times in a way that allows the spiritual content of life to be subjectively experienced without interruption. On

the basis of neurophysiological refinement, enlightenment can be lived.

“Our purpose with regard to spiritual development,” Maharishi said, “is to give a very clear indication of what spiritual growth means and how it is naturally, spontaneously, effortlessly brought about by the TM program. We give the understanding, and the positive experience. That is our purpose. In everyone’s life, wholeness should blossom.”

For several generations, everything religious or spiritual has been viewed with suspicion by many in our science-based and highly materialistic culture. (If you can’t see it, touch it, weigh it, heat it, launch it, or smash it, it isn’t real!) But Maharishi removed the veils of mystery from spiritual life. He showed that although subjective experiences of pure consciousness may indeed be forever beyond the reach of objective science, the physiological concomitant to the experience, and the progressive transformations of physiology and psychology as pure consciousness grows to full expression in enlightenment, are measurable and well within the range of physical science and objective discussion.

Although your state of consciousness, your inner awareness, is always intimate to *you*, it is also the product of the functioning of your brain. Having your brain waves, blood pressure, and breathing rate monitored and measured cannot threaten the reality of your personal experience, or detract from it in any way. If you are like most people I’ve interviewed, you’d be fascinated to find out what is going on in your body and brain as you quietly meditate. And if you’re living a higher state of consciousness, allowing science to

measure the physiological, psychological, and behavioral correlates can contribute to the progress of knowledge.

What this means is that, with his Vedic Science, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi laid the foundations for a universal science of consciousness, a science of spiritual development. This knowledge has the potential to open wide the gates of spiritual unfoldment for large numbers of men and women throughout the world for generations to come, bringing fulfillment to the spiritual aspirations of people in every religious tradition.







## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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### FREEDOM

#### *INNER AND OUTER FREEDOM*

Freedom is one of the more frequently used words in our age. Politicians use it incessantly, and the media is not far behind. But what does it really mean? What is a free man or woman, a free action, a free society?

First of all, we ought to distinguish between two kinds of freedom. These correspond to the two aspects of life we have been discussing: inner and outer.

Outer freedom is freedom of action. Defined in its simplest terms, it means that people can do what they please, that no individual or institution will stand between their desire and its fulfillment. It means the ability to openly express any opinion, to move from one place to another unhindered, and so on. We might call these aspects political or social freedom. They are governed by the laws of society. But even more, they are governed by the level of consciousness *of* that society.

The more enlightened a community or society is—the more its citizens are broad-minded, concerned about the welfare of their fellow residents on the planet, and living at a high level of individual fulfillment and happiness—the more there will be freedom in that society. The more narrow a society is, the

more its population is driven by suspicion, fear, anger, hatred, violence, and intolerance, the less freedom exists and can exist. It's an old truth: as a person is within, so will his or her outward actions be; as individuals are, so will society be. "By their fruits ye shall know them."<sup>1</sup>

Knowing this, Maharishi did not concern himself with the external aspects of freedom. His energies were directed toward bringing each person to a state of inner freedom or liberation from the bondage of ignorance—ignorance of one's own nature and its immense potentialities. For as long as individuals are bound by limited vision and negative emotions, it matters little whether they go north or south, wear red or blue, eat rice or potatoes—they are not free, for they carry with them the prison of their own shortcomings, which restrict their understanding, their feelings, and their actions.

### *FREEDOM AS SELF-REALIZATION*

In *Escape from Freedom*, psychologist and social philosopher Erich Fromm suggested that the key to freedom is self-realization. "The realization of the self," he wrote, "is accomplished ... by the realization of man's total personality, by the active expression of his emotional and intellectual potentialities.... In other words, positive freedom consists in the spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality."<sup>2</sup>

Fromm's view is entirely consistent with what Maharishi wrote in *Science of Being and Art of Living*: "As long as the mind does not function with its full potential and is not in a position to use all the faculties it has, its freedom is restricted.

Therefore the first important step in making the mind really free is the full unfoldment of its potentialities.”<sup>3</sup>

I think most of us accept the truth of this principle. But, as we discovered in our discussion of values, the difficulty comes in living up to what we know to be valid. We acknowledge and embrace the importance of self-realization, but how do we *do that*?

### *WHAT IS THE SELF?*

What exactly *is* the self that we are asked to realize or know? Is it the body, with all its limbs and organs? This is certainly part of what we are, but there must be something deeper, for the body changes, grows, and is completely renewed every seven years, yet some continuity remains to retain our identity.

Is the self our thoughts, our feelings, our memories, our desires, our likes and dislikes? Yes, surely. But these things change, too. What we care about or value today, tomorrow may seem foolish or unimportant. Our moods and values change; our perceptions change. Is the self no more than this ever-changing, unstable, limited mind and body, full of undeveloped capabilities and unresolved longings, this storehouse of memories and desires? If this were so, where would be the freedom in knowing such a self? Where would be the freedom in actualizing a restricted, ever-changing self, bound by time, space, and causation, by the ephemeral nature of life with its constant vicissitudes? It would certainly be a tenuous and limited type of freedom.

But what if the true nature of the Self, in its deepest aspect, were eternal and unchanging, infinite in intelligence, energy, and happiness? “He is never born, nor does he ever die,” says the Bhagavad Gita of the true, essential Self of everyone:

Unborn, eternal, everlasting, ancient, he is not slain when the body is slain.... These bodies are known to have an end; the dweller in the body is eternal, imperishable, infinite.... He is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable, ever the same. He is declared to be unmanifest, unthinkable, unchangeable.<sup>4</sup>

If this were the essential nature of our Self, more deeply and truly who we are than the whole relative bundle of constantly shifting thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories—which will always be *part* of who we are—then self-realization and “know thyself” would have an entirely fresh and different meaning. If you knew yourself to be eternal and unbounded, if you felt grounded in a field of stability and peace, unshakable and strong no matter what experiences came along in the ever-changing sphere of life, you would be free. That is, if this were your *experience*—knowledge in the most profound sense, beyond mere intellectual understanding. If this were your direct perception and an awareness you had at all times, then nothing could overthrow your freedom. In all circumstances, you would know yourself to be free. Maharishi calls this state of liberation Cosmic Consciousness, and facilitating every individual’s journey to this state is one of the principal goals of Vedic Science.

*“The bliss of this state eliminates the possibility of any sorrow, great or small. Into the bright light of the sun no darkness can penetrate. No sorrow can enter blissconsciousness, nor can bliss-consciousness know any*

*gain greater than itself. This state of self-sufficiency leaves one steadfast in oneself, fulfilled in lasting contentment.”*<sup>5</sup>

— MAHARISHI

### *COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS: ETERNAL FREEDOM*

When the conscious mind transcends all that is relative and is left by itself in a state of pure awareness, this is called *self-consciousness*. And as Maharishi explains in *Science of Being and Art of Living*:

When this self-consciousness is forever maintained, even when the mind emerges from the transcendent and engages in the field of activity, then self-consciousness attains the status of Cosmic Consciousness. Self-consciousness is then established eternally in the nature of the mind. Even when the mind is awake, dreaming or in deep sleep, self-consciousness is maintained....

Cosmic Consciousness means that consciousness which includes the experience of the relative field together with the state of absolute Being. This state of Cosmic Consciousness is one where the mind lives in eternal freedom, remaining unbound by whatever it experiences during all activities in the relative world.<sup>6</sup>

Cosmic Consciousness is a fifth state of consciousness, developing naturally out of the regular alternation of the fourth state (transcendental consciousness) with the ordinary activity of life. Maharishi explains that just as a cloth can be permanently dyed by a process of alternately dipping it in the dye and then allowing it to fade, repeatedly, until it is

color-fast, the inner field of Being becomes permanently infused into the nature of the mind by allowing the mind to experience the inner silence of pure consciousness, and then coming out into full, dynamic activity. Gradually the mind becomes able to sustain that unboundedness more and more fully, until Being—pure consciousness or the Self—is not lost from awareness at any time.

Every state of consciousness has a corresponding physiology, a specific signature or style of functioning of the body and nervous system. As the waking, dreaming, sleeping, and transcendental states have physiological correlates, found whenever those states of consciousness are experienced, the fifth state also has its unique physiology, which research is beginning to decipher.

During TM practice, as the meditator appreciates thoughts at increasingly refined levels of mental activity, the body goes along for the ride and enjoys profound rest, triggering a constellation of biochemical and electrophysiological processes that allow knots of deep-rooted stresses and strains to be dissolved or “untangled” and released from the system. After meditation, one feels refreshed, more alert, and more energetic. Over time, repeatedly setting mind and body to gain this deep rest permits accumulated, long-stored stresses to be released. Eventually, a stress-free system gives rise to the fifth state of consciousness. The field of Being, the unified self-referral field of pure consciousness, which has always existed at the deepest level of our individual existence, permanently opens to awareness. When awareness of Being is never lost, Cosmic Consciousness is gained.

“This state,” Maharishi said, “has been the object of man’s great quest from time immemorial because it glorifies all aspects of life. The material life of man is enlightened by the light of the inner Self.”<sup>7</sup>

Repeated experiences of transcending not only facilitate purification of the body, they also change the brain. The highly coherent brain-wave patterns characteristic of the experience of pure consciousness during transcendence start to appear during daily activity. A new neurophysiological highway system gets built up as the brain restructures its pathways to produce a new state of consciousness, in which the awareness of Being or pure consciousness co-exists alongside wakefulness, dreaming, and deep dreamless sleep—the state Maharishi called Cosmic Consciousness.

Meditators are beginning to verify such statements from their own experience. “The most significant effect of meditation for me,” said one man, “has been the increase of awareness of Self during activity. This increased Self-awareness has permitted me to see my actions more clearly and objectively, to be more deeply aware of my thoughts, to relate to my surroundings more intimately, and to relate to people more empathetically.”

This is what Maharishi has called living 200 percent of life: inner spiritual fulfillment along with enjoyment of the glories of creation. The more fully we know who we are and can utilize our inner faculties, the more fully and freely we can function in life.

In the remainder of this chapter, let’s look at some of the practical consequences of living an enlightened life.



## *FREEDOM FROM FEAR*

Many of the people I interviewed reported that anxiety and fears diminished or seemed to vanish after beginning TM, a personal experience supported by substantial research. (See [Chapter 6](#).) “Even a slight practice of Transcendental Meditation relieves great fears,” Maharishi said. Freedom and fear cannot easily coexist. Fear eliminates choice, and prevents realistic evaluation and spontaneous response. The physiological alarm bells of fear reverberate through the body and disrupt the biochemical balance. The well-known “fight or flight” response is a perfect example: our choices are instantly narrowed to two, and we become a prisoner of the body’s chemistry.

When fear diminishes, openness to the possibilities of the moment increases, and freedom grows. “Many of my fears have left me,” said a young woman, “and it’s easier for me in my associations with others. The area of social contacts has always been hard for me because I’m very shy by nature, but through meditation, I find this situation getting better each day.”

As consciousness evolves, the Self becomes gradually more present in one’s awareness, until we know it in its true status as greater than the personal ego with its endless concerns. If I know myself to be eternal, immortal, and unbounded—not my body, of course, which remains subject to the limitations of time and space, but my *consciousness*, who I feel I am—then what is there to worry about or fear? Again, we’re talking about a knowing that is experienced, not just an idea or even a strong conviction.

Maharishi explained this at length in his *Translation and Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita*. Here is a representative passage:

The mind, which has gained the state of bliss-consciousness through Transcendental Meditation, remains naturally contented on coming out from the transcendental state to the field of activity. This contentment, being grounded in the very nature of the mind, does not allow the mind to waver and be affected in pleasure or pain, nor allow it to become affected by attachment or fear in the world.<sup>8</sup>

#### *FREEDOM FROM MISTAKES*

Rising to Cosmic Consciousness confers a welcome freedom from mistakes, from the limitations of our individual personalities with their necessarily partial knowledge, circumscribed experience, and imperfect ability to calculate the consequences of our actions. This is because, when Cosmic Consciousness is established, the mind has recognized its identity with the Unified Field, the home of all the laws of nature, the seat of the governing intelligence of nature. As a result, one's actions are spontaneously in alignment with nature and Natural Law: progressive, evolutionary, uplifting, and conducive to growth and unfoldment, a positive influence on the near environment and even on the farthest reaches of the cosmos. One has lost the dubious freedom to make mistakes and to generate a life-damaging influence, and gained the freedom to express, we might say, the will of God, the grace of God, to everything throughout creation.

In Transcendental Consciousness, the boundaries of thought and perception melt away, and the mind opens to its unbounded status. Individual mind—the mind of an individual person with all its specific concerns and experiences, the vast filing cabinet of stored impressions, of songs and sorrows, plans and mental pictures—temporarily vanishes from view, replaced by the peaceful silence of pure consciousness.

“Silent mind,” Maharishi said, “is universal mind.” There is the awareness, “This is who I really am, this is my true nature.” And then we are back in the realm of thoughts, sense perceptions, plans, the whole rigmarole of living. But over time, that pure consciousness ceases to be somewhere else, some place we have to go to beyond ordinary waking consciousness—it ceases to be transcendental—and becomes a constant factor of our being. “Silence is no longer a place I go, it is who I am,” said one meditator.

When such an individual acts in the world, Maharishi said, “This action is quite naturally free from the narrowness of petty individuality, from the shortsightedness of selfish attachment, which previously held him imprisoned ... and although the individual ego continues to function, the action is that of divine intelligence working through the individual who is living cosmic existence.”<sup>9</sup>

Such a life, Maharishi said, “... is a very natural expression of cosmic intelligence in the world. It represents the state of eternal freedom here on earth. Nothing in the world is able to overshadow or disturb this state.”<sup>10</sup>

But what about on the way to Cosmic Consciousness, when our actions are not yet invariably right and spontaneously life-supporting? We are well on our way, but, realistically, most of us are not there yet. What can we do to loosen the grip of negative mental states and harmful or at least not-the-best behaviors?

The answer begins with our thoughts. Many people are unaware of the constant stream of thoughts flowing in their minds day and night, and they may be particularly unaware of how much of this thought content is tinged with negativity. “I hate my job ... my boss ... the commute to work ...” and so on, or, “Why can’t I make my relationships work?” “Why do I always say things like that?”

As long as we don’t realize we are having these thoughts, there’s nothing we can do about it. Meditation begins to open an interior space in which we become conscious of the flow of thoughts. We start to see that we are not the thoughts, but rather, a *witness* to them: they come and go and we remain, able to observe them, still here after they are gone. That awareness provides a place to stand, a point of leverage from which we have the power to reject some thoughts (*No point complaining about the traffic, there’s nothing I can do about it*) and choose others (*While I’m stuck here, I might as well plan the report I need to write*). In other words, instead of just sitting still in the dark, we can begin to take a director’s role in the ongoing movie in our minds.

This is a good development, and begins to confer real freedom. Instead of being a helpless victim to the onrushing thoughts, which may poison our minds and lead to actions whose consequences we regret, we can select from the infinite

pool of possible thoughts something more positive, uplifting, or useful. We become able to respond beneficially, rather than merely react.

The ultimate freedom comes to those who persevere with meditation, clear their minds and bodies of the accumulated stresses that are the breeding ground for negative thoughts and behaviors, and steadily awaken to the enlightened state of life in which positive (life-supporting, evolutionary) thinking and acting are natural, spontaneous, and unforced. As we move toward that state, the inner “space” of freedom—the gap between thoughts when we are aware of them—becomes wider, and our freedom of choice more tangible and profound. The key that most effectively opens the door to this growth of freedom is *transcendence*.

### *“MOTHER IS AT HOME”: FREEDOM TO GROW AND CREATE*

As we saw in [Chapter 9](#), researchers in the 21st century have rejected the old mechanistic notion that the brain is “hardwired” and operates like an old-fashioned telephone switchboard. Instead, experiments at the forefront of science are showing the unfathomable responsiveness and fluidity of the brain, which transforms itself every instant. Each of the estimated 100 billion neurons in your brain is connected right now to anywhere from 100 to 100,000 other neurons. But as conditions in the body and surrounding environment change, so does the brain, forming new networks of connections in a flash and then unforming them just as quickly to process whatever is happening in the next moment.

“Imagine,” wrote Craig Pearson in *The Complete Book of Yogic Flying*, “sitting in an office and receiving 100,000 phone calls every second—and you must evaluate the incoming information and decide upon and make the appropriate response to each one. That’s what each single neuron is doing—with billions of them doing this simultaneously.”<sup>11</sup>

Although the brain is not hard-wired into anything like solid channels, patterns do get established and grow stronger by repetition as neurons link up in familiar ways. As the saying goes, “Neurons that fire together wire together.” Repeated behaviors (and this includes habits of thought) create pathways that increase the odds of repeating those same behaviors. By contrast, a totally free person would be able to respond in a fresh, unconditioned, and spontaneous way as events unfold. Jerry Jarvis, the longtime director of the Students International Meditation Society, used to say that “a cosmically evolved individual acts naturally in any given situation”—that is, not according to an old script or tape.

One way in which old habits can be changed and the mind reprogrammed is through a great deal of persistent effort—but how successful have *you* been in discarding self-destructive or negative habits and developing new ones via willpower?

Or, change can be initiated in an effortless way by deeply resting and allowing the body and nervous system to heal. Reducing and eliminating accumulated stress frees the nervous system to operate more normally; a person gains an increasing ability to stop responding to stimuli according to old patterns that have been established and perpetuated by

stress, and finds it much easier to change. And that's just what meditators say about themselves.

"I feel that my life is improving in a steady, consistent manner," one woman remarked. "For the first time I feel that I am really growing—mentally, physically, and spiritually—every day."

It is a great relief to feel that one's life is flowing easily toward greater fulfillment. Such a feeling comes as a comfort to the mind and heart.

Many people today experience the opposite: a feeling of "searching." We may not know exactly what we're looking for, but as we move from one experience of life to another, somewhere inside we feel, "No, this is not it, either." We may feel that there is *something* waiting for us, some destiny, some person, and we have to keep moving, keep looking until we find it. And until we find it, as long as we do not feel at home with life, we are not free.

"Man has been so carried away that his thirst for eternal happiness has sought fulfillment in the fleeting joys of the outside world," Maharishi wrote.

The thirsty man has concerned himself with drops of water deposited on green grass, just dew-drops, leaving behind the big pond, the ocean of water.... Nothing of the outside world is able to satisfy the mind, but all the time the mind is pushing on to this and pushing on to that, being kicked by this, and being kicked by that....

Man is born of bliss, of consciousness, of creativity, of wisdom.... It is only necessary to begin to enjoy. But not finding it anywhere, obviously missing it in day-to-day life, the majority begin to suffer. It is just a little ignorance which makes a man suffer, ignorance of his own potentiality. When a man loses conscious awareness of his own blissful real nature, he loses the divine dignity that belongs to him. His life becomes a struggle.

But when contact with that inner treasury is restored, life ceases to be a struggle and begins to be lived in freedom. The search is over, and instead of seeking, one is free to begin enjoying.

Great confidence and security are born of contact with the inner Being. Maharishi described it as feeling that “mother is at home”—as children feel safe and free to play and explore when they know their mother is at home in the next room, so those who become centered and established in the unboundedness of their own Self feel increasingly peaceful and at home with all fields of knowledge and activity. Deep within, on a quiet level of the mind, a profound inner stability provides a foundation of comfortable confidence for all their activities.

#### *TAKING IT AS IT COMES: FREEDOM FOR TODAY*

Ordinarily most of us reach out for the future ... planning, dreaming, scheming. The present may feel empty, dull, or not sufficiently satisfying. Or we may feel we are simply too busy and pressured to be truly present to enjoy the moment. We hope that tomorrow will be better, and that our life may breathe and move with more energy, more happiness. But



when we are fulfilled in the present, when we feel fully alive, fully real, and our accomplishments today give us intense and profound satisfaction, we are free *of* the future and free *for* the future. And for the present. Every moment is real and vital.

“I have before wondered,” one man said, “why I felt myself reaching out for things (women, excitement, fulfillment, knowledge). I felt an anguish when completion was not found. Since learning Transcendental Meditation, I have found such inner happiness that it outshines relative joys, thus there is no tension connected with the things I desire. I do not fear losing anything anymore.... Reaching out I’ve found is the result of lack of unity with the Self. Reaching out has changed into extending a hand and not expecting.”

“I now take each day as it comes, without worrying about the future,” a woman in California wrote. Not *worrying* about the future doesn’t mean not caring or thinking about it. Maharishi emphasized the importance of foresight and proper planning for maximum accomplishments in life. What is meant by these comments, I believe, is that happiness today, and a genuine confidence in one’s ability to enjoy tomorrow and deal successfully with its demands, liberates us from the anxiety born of over-speculation about what the future will bring. If we are able to live fully today, we won’t be excessively concerned about tomorrow.

“I’m pretty sure that life isn’t setting any fewer or easier problems in my path,” said a television producer, “but I find problems much easier to cope with. All facets of life, work and play, become more of one thing: the joy of being alive in a world that seems to get bigger, richer, and better every day. Before, life seemed to be narrowing down like a funnel; now

I'm looking out the other end, and the horizon expands and grows into possibilities I never dreamed existed. Overall, I am more at peace with the world.”

*A PROVOCATIVE PROPOSAL*

Rather than talk much about political or social freedom, we've “confined” ourselves within the boundaries of the internal, individual aspects of freedom. But as I suggested earlier in the chapter, external liberty rests upon, and is inseparable from, people's internal state. If even a relatively small percentage of individuals in society were enjoying the joyful, enlightened state of life we've seen expressed in these pages, is it too idealistic to believe that political and social freedom would be the result? Let's explore this possibility further.





## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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### THE WORLD WE CAN CREATE

During my training in India to become a teacher of TM, although living between the forests of the Himalayan foothills and low cliffs looking down on the clear, swift-flowing waters of the Ganges, with no televisions, no radios and, to the best of my knowledge, only one land-line telephone, we were still somehow aware of world events. At one point, a serious crisis seemed to be looming in the Middle East, and I remember a course participant standing up at the back of the meeting hall one afternoon and expressing our collective concern by asking, “Isn’t there something we can do about it?”

Maharishi, who usually responded to questions quickly, became very quiet. Finally, he said softly, “Yes, there is. But not yet.”

I was very moved by that long moment of silence, and by that reply. I felt strongly that it was prophetic, and that I would someday find out what it was that we could do about the senseless violence, hatred, and killing that seemed to pervade the world despite the best efforts of so many well-intentioned people. I would not be disappointed.

*A PASSION FOR PEACE*

Working for a more peaceful world had been a strong desire of mine from very early in life. Like my father, whose small book, *How to Achieve World Peace*, sits permanently on a corner of my desk, and my mother, who would often view world events with great sadness and wonder aloud why people had to act as they did, I always believed in the possibility of a world at peace. Recognizing the same desire in Maharishi when I first heard *him* speak—and sensing that he actually had a viable way of creating that peace—was one of the main reasons I was drawn to participate in his work.

From his very earliest talks in India in the mid-1950s, Maharishi spoke passionately about world peace. He lamented the failed efforts of international agreements and treaties to bring about the peace that people all over the world craved, and he suggested an alternative strategy.

“I believe in collective peace and happiness through *individual* peace and happiness,” he said in the south Indian state of Kerala in 1955, at the outset of his global travels. “Mere talk of peace has no practical value. If one peaceless and miserable man could be made peaceful and happy, it would mean something of value, positive and concrete. If a formula could be brought to light for transforming peacelessness and miseries of life into peace and joy of a permanent nature, that would be a boon to society and for the whole of mankind.”<sup>1</sup>

In his books and training programs, and in thousands of public talks over the following decades, he proposed just such a formula: “For a forest to be green, each individual tree must be green. For world peace to be a living reality, every individual must first be peaceful.”

This, in the early days of his work (the late '50s, '60s, and '70s), was a truly unorthodox, out-of-the-box message. People of good will, interested in what was often called “the problem of world peace,” almost universally thought of peace merely as a cessation of armed conflict, or at best, as disarmament treaties or an uneasy truce sustained by international peace-keeping forces. Maharishi often said he was interested in a peace that would be “more than the mere absence of war.” Even if military conflicts were halted for a time, a world filled with people who are tense, stressed, suspicious, and intolerant of one another cannot truly be peaceful.

Since about 1000 B.C., historians say, thousands of wars have been fought and more than 8,000 peace treaties have been agreed upon, holding for an average of nine years. After the horrific devastation of the first world war, the League of Nations was founded in 1920 to ensure that the war would be, as U.S. President Woodrow Wilson promised, “the war to end all wars.” Twenty years later, the far more destructive second world war erupted. Statesmen tried again; in 1945 the United Nations was established. Since then there have been well over 150 major wars. Clearly, political negotiations, treaties, and above all, the use of arms, have not succeeded in creating a lasting state of world peace.

Yet that was the goal Maharishi set for himself. His self-appointed task was to bring peace to individual women and men, and through them, to the world as a whole. And not a passive peace, but a dynamic, progressive state of balance, harmony, and happiness—a life vibrant with creativity and joy. Only lasting happiness and contentment, he insisted, can be the basis of peace.

He spoke as if it were an easy thing, bringing to billions of individuals the knowledge of how to take the restless mind to a state of eternal contentment. If the problem of world peace seems too complex and overwhelming, he would say, let's divide it into manageable units. The individual is the unit of society, the unit of the world. Bring peace to enough individuals and the problem of world peace can be solved.

*“WARS START IN THE MINDS OF MEN”*

“Wars start in the minds of men,” says the UNESCO charter. But *peace* also starts in our minds and hearts. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the first woman president of the UN General Assembly (and sister of India's first president, Jawaharlal Nehru) put it this way: “There is superficial order, but there is no inner tranquility and understanding.... Without a sound state of mind, diplomatic, economic and trade conferences can achieve nothing”—a remarkable statement from a career diplomat and politician. “The only true foundation for peaceful coexistence is the right state of mind.”<sup>2</sup>

“Where there is no love of man, no love of life,” said the Trappist monk Thomas Merton,

then make all the laws you want, all the edicts and treaties, set up all the safeguards and inspections, fill the air with spying satellites, and hang cameras on the moon. As long as you see your fellow-man as a being essentially to be feared, mistrusted, hated, and destroyed, there cannot be peace on earth.” But, he added, “Where there is a deep, simple, all-embracing love of man, of the created world of living and inanimate things, then there will be respect for life, for freedom, for truth, for justice.”<sup>3</sup>

Our outer life is the expression of who we are within. Every action we perform, every word we speak, is a reflection of our inner state and constitutes our contribution to our family, our friends, and our society. Every expression of our self, positive or negative, creative or useless, wise or foolish, influences those around us, and thereby influences the state of the world. A person who is peaceful and full of love contributes peacefulness and love to the environment. Those who are inwardly stressed, frustrated, and full of tension and anger—no matter how vehemently they may wave the banner of peace—are contributing tension and anger to their surroundings and to the world.

A warm, loving home invites us, holds us; we hate to leave such places and such people. Their atmosphere is supportive and comfortable. I've been a visitor in many homes and communities that were pervaded by a genuine, unforced sweetness and peace, a welcoming openness that was a reminder of how life can be. On the other hand, we have all experienced walking into a room or a home where there has just been—or where there always seems to be—some type of negativity or tension. We feel it. And just as tension and stress can build up inside us until it finally breaks out, the same thing can happen in a family or, on a larger scale, a society or on the world stage.

In 1962, in a booklet entitled *Toward World Peace*, Maharishi pointed out that “when we allow ourselves to be provoked into argument and hostility, it does not occur to us that our quarrels could have anything remotely to do with the peace of the world. And yet it is the sum, the mass, of these infinitely small conflicts which, put together, help to make up a total atmosphere of tension and hostility.”<sup>4</sup> Some years later he



explained why this is so important: “When large numbers of people are unhappy, tense and unrighteous, the atmosphere of the world is saturated with these tense influences. When tensions in the atmosphere increase beyond a certain limit the atmosphere breaks into collective calamities.”<sup>5</sup>

But as he said from the earliest days of his work, “I believe if we can make individuals peaceful and joyful, the nation”—or the world—“of such peaceful and joyful individuals will be a nation full of peace and joy.” As simplistic as that might sound, it’s hard to argue with the logic of it. It is the greenness of the trees that makes the forest green. Or in the words of the American peace activist A. J. Muste, “There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.”

### *CHANGE BEGINS WITHIN*

The time is long past when we can realistically expect governments to solve our problems. The responsibility for change is ours. “I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments,” said former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower. “Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it.”<sup>6</sup> As in the often-quoted aphorism attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, we must become the change we want to see. Positive, evolutionary transformation begins with us, or better, *within* us.

The collective consciousness of any group, whether it be a family or nation or the world as a whole, is an aggregate of the quality of consciousness of all the individuals in the group. D.T. Suzuki, eminent scholar of Zen Buddhism, said

that “whatever form our group life may take, its constituents are individuals after all.” Therefore, as long as individual people do not go through a transformation, “no amount of science and knowledge will improve the human situation.”<sup>7</sup>

All the conditions and institutions in which we find ourselves embedded were created—and are constantly being re-created—by human beings. For better or worse, they are our own handiwork, emanating from our collective consciousness with all its strengths and weaknesses. When enough of us have awakened to the truth of who we are, and we carry that awareness with us at all times, when we are collectively capable of a broader perspective and deeper compassion for our fellow creatures, positive changes in all our interactions and institutions will follow naturally. When enough individuals change, society will change, or as the *I Ching* says with typical succinctness: “He improves his era and does not boast about it. His character is influential and transforms men.”<sup>8</sup>

If there is light in the soul,

There will be beauty in the person.

If there is beauty in the person,

There will be harmony in the house.

If there is harmony in the house,

There will be order in the nation.

If there is order in the nation,

There will be peace in the world.

— Chinese Proverb

“As long as statesmen remain ignorant of the possibility of improving the lives of individuals from within,” Maharishi wrote, “and of thereby bringing them abundant peace, happiness and creative intelligence, the problem of world peace will always be dealt with only on the surface, and the world will continue to suffer its cold and hot wars.... Any generation whose leaders sincerely try to apply this principle widely will succeed in creating lasting world peace.”<sup>9</sup>

But how long will it take, one tree at a time, for the whole forest to become green? Do we have time to wait for that to happen?

Fortunately, we don't have to.

### *THE MAHARISHI EFFECT*

In the final days of 1973, news reached Maharishi and those of us who were with him at his temporary headquarters in Switzerland that two scientists had made a remarkable discovery. In 11 cities in the United States where one percent or more of the population had learned TM, the crime rate had declined suddenly and quite dramatically. Compared to 11 control cities with similar populations (in size, geographic region, number of college students, and so on), there was a decrease of 16 percent, as crime in the one percent cities dropped by 8.2 percent, while in the non-TM cities, it increased by 8.3 percent. [Figure 15-1]

### DECREASED CRIME RATE

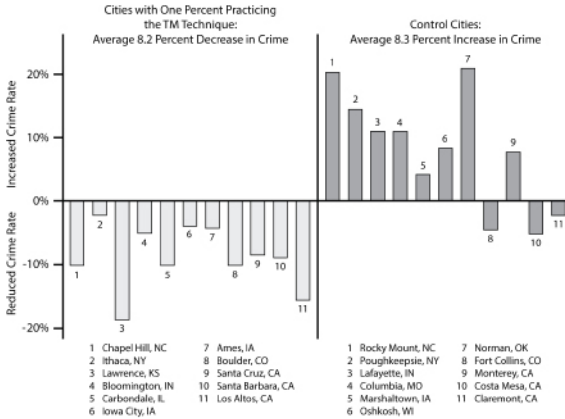


Figure 15-1

A landmark study in 1973 found that crime rates decreased significantly in cities with one percent or more of the people practicing Transcendental Meditation.

In an era of steadily mounting crime, this was a potentially momentous finding, and it had a powerful effect on Maharishi. It seemed to put him greatly at ease. Now he would not have to find a way to teach *everyone* to meditate; one percent of the population would be enough to turn the direction of the world away from disorder, violence, and war, toward positivity and peace. A small percentage of people, a little more peaceful and enlightened than most, would be sufficient to influence the lives of all the others.

With the discovery of this one percent effect—which scientists promptly labeled “The Maharishi Effect”—he said, “If just one percent of the people, moving about in the streets with minds a little bit more orderly than others, can change

the tendencies of the people, it is possible now to create a society free from problems and suffering.”

By instructing enough people in TM, he told us, “any nation whatsoever, whatever be the condition today, whatever has been the story till yesterday, can rise to the highest state of harmony, happiness, and freedom from problems and suffering, any time the people of the country demand or desire.” He was so pleased and delighted that when he emerged a few days later from his room after observing his customary beginning-of-the-year week of silence, he said, “Through the window of science, we see the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment,” and held a celebration to mark the event.

The true extent of the drop in crime wasn't revealed until several years later, when new studies were published in the *Journal of Crime and Justice*. Michael Dillbeck and David Orme-Johnson discovered that, rather than only 11, there were actually 24 cities that had moved above one percent meditating. In a rigorous analysis using data provided by the FBI, they looked at 11 years of crime statistics (1967 to 1977) in the one percent cities and a matched control group of 24 others with under one percent practicing TM. In 1973, the first year the number of meditators exceeded one percent, the crime rate plummeted by 22 percent.<sup>10</sup> In the “control” cities, crime increased 2 percent, for a difference of 24 percent. Over the next five years, there was a continuing significant difference in the amount of crime in the two groups.

Not only did the crime rate drop, but suicides fell 13.7 percent in the one percent cities, while rising 11.4 percent in the control cities. Also, traffic accidents declined by 4.7 percent versus a 14.9 percent increase in the controls. As Maharishi

had predicted, negative trends began to subside, and positivity increased.<sup>11</sup>

It's probably worth noting that those who learned TM in these cities were not people with criminal records who suddenly had a change of heart. Nor did any of the meditators do anything out of their ordinary routines to reduce crime in their neighborhoods or cities. It wasn't on the active, surface level that the influence was generated: it was a *field effect*, like the invisible electromagnetic field that can deliver sound and pictures to your TV through the air, or the influence of a magnet. Remember the last time you held two bar magnets near each other? You could feel them either pulling toward each other, or repelling. You couldn't *see* anything; it was the invisible field: in the case of these instances of reduced crime, the field of *consciousness*.

#### *THE TM-SIDHI PROGRAM—ANOTHER LEAP FORWARD*

In the autumn of 1976, Maharishi began teaching the TM-Sidhi techniques, including Yogic Flying. The *Sidhis* (a Sanskrit word meaning “powers” or “perfections”) are advanced practices that were described thousands of years ago in the *Yoga Sutras* by the Indian sage Patanjali, who is often considered the “father” of Yoga philosophy. These techniques are a natural extension of Transcendental Meditation. In TM, the mind quiets down and awareness opens to pure consciousness, the Unified Field of all the laws of nature. The TM-Sidhi program cultures the ability to think and act from that field of enormous potential, to enliven what Maharishi sometimes referred to as the *total potential* of Natural Law. This most fundamental level of existence underlies all mental and physical phenomena and contains

within it all possible objects and events in an unmanifest seed form.

In TM, our individual mind sets out from the active, surface levels of thought, journeys through finer, quieter levels, and ultimately transcends and associates itself with this universal field. The TM-Sidhi practices cultivate the ability to consciously function from this depth of being. Thoughts and actions, arising from the field of intelligence and power that governs the activities of nature, spontaneously draw the support of Natural Law for the fulfillment of goals and desires. Stated another way, as the mind becomes increasingly anchored in pure consciousness, thoughts and actions become more in accord with the evolutionary power of Natural Law.

The most powerful—and certainly the most dramatic—of the TM-Sidhi techniques is Yogic Flying. All the others have results that are internal and invisible to an observer; they cultivate humane qualities such as compassion and friendliness, as well as an enhanced ability to perceive and to know through the senses, intellect, and intuition. But in Yogic Flying, the meditator, sitting motionless and usually with legs tucked up in the lotus position, lifts up in the air. At first, not very far. The Yoga tradition states that there are three stages to developing the ability to fly: hopping, hovering, and then actually flying through the air, and as far as I know, almost everyone practicing the technique is in the first stage, with the body lifting straight up and then coming down, or moving forward in a series of hops.<sup>12</sup>

People practicing Yogi Flying report feeling lightness, exhilaration, expanded awareness, heightened energy, and a bliss that pervades the body as well as the mind. Research

indicates that the beneficial results of TM practice are extended by the TM-Sidhi program. For example, investigators have found that at the moment of “lift-off,” brain-wave coherence, normally high during meditation, becomes even more pronounced.

### *GROUP DYNAMICS OF CONSCIOUSNESS*

As enjoyable and evolutionary as the TM-Sidhi program is for individuals, it turns out that collective practice, especially of Yogic Flying, which Maharishi called *Group Dynamics of Consciousness*, is even more powerful and significant. He had always encouraged people to meditate together in groups, saying that the experience would be more profound, more peaceful and settled, and would have a “warming” effect on the surroundings.

When a person practices TM and enjoys inner quietness and peace of mind, that peacefulness, based in profound coherence within the brain, radiates outward beyond the boundaries of the individual. Although transcending takes place within the mind, the effect does not stop at the skull; it flows out into the environment as calming waves of orderliness and coherence. When isolated individuals meditate in their homes, if there are enough of them scattered throughout a community they lessen negativity and promote harmony: the one percent, or Maharishi Effect. A group of meditators practicing together generates a more potent influence.

The peace-promoting influence of group practice is well known in the Vedic tradition of India. Writing about it in the mid-1950s, renowned yoga teacher Swami Sivananda



extolled the value of group practice both for those in the group and for society as a whole. “Collective *sadhana* (spiritual practice) such as common meditation, common prayers, common *sankirtan* (chanting),” the swami said, “are more potent or effective than individual *sadhana*. When people join together, you get the combined effect produced by the simultaneous efforts of all those who take part. Greater the number of persons, greater the flow of inward spiritual faculties ... a huge spiritual current is generated.”

He then brought out a principle that would turn out to be central to Maharishi’s work: “These powerful vibrations are carried away to distant places and they bring elevation of mind, solace, strength, and peace to all people, and work as invisible harbingers of peace, harmony, and concord. *The powerful, soothing, beneficial vibrations will annihilate hostile forces and quickly bring Peace and Bliss to the whole world.* The benefits are beyond description.” If people gather together for group practice, Sivananda said, “You will have a new India, a new Europe, a new world!”<sup>13</sup>

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE POWER OF A GROUP

*“The power of a group grows as the square of the number of people meditating together. This is the same principle that’s at work with loudspeakers playing music in synch, or for antennas broadcasting a radio signal. Two loudspeakers produce four times the sound of a single loudspeaker, if they are close together and playing the same music. Three broadcasting antennas will generate a focused beam nine times as powerful as one. It’s called the  $n^2$  (n-squared) effect of constructive interference; it’s a universal principle of field behavior. If you put together human radiators, radiating*

*calm, peace, and order, they are going to produce a group effect that grows as the square of the number of meditators. That explains how a relative handful, just the square root of one percent, can have a demonstrable, scientifically proven effect of peace, calm, and reduced crime, even on a national scale.*"<sup>14</sup>

— JOHN HAGELIN, PH.D., QUANTUM PHYSICIST AND EDUCATOR

Knowledge of this principle, combined with calculations by scientists working with him that the one percent effect of meditation could be achieved by *the square root of one percent* practicing the more powerful TM-Sidhi program together in a group, led Maharishi to create opportunities for the newly minted Sidhas to practice together. [See Sidebar: The Science Behind the Power of a Group.] He asked TM teachers around the world to convene courses in their areas, which he called *World Peace Assemblies*. With the new name came a new purposefulness. People attending could feel that, in addition to the advances they might make personally, they were also contributing a ray of light, a wave of harmony toward a peaceful world.

Then, starting in the late 1970s, Maharishi began conducting experiments on a larger scale. The early studies had reported retrospectively on the one percent effect in relatively small cities. Could it be used *intentionally* to generate a statistically measurable influence of social coherence? Could it work in a city steeped in crime, or in a country at war? Could it be used to resolve international conflicts? What would it take to move the world?

## *THE IDEAL SOCIETY CAMPAIGN*

In mid-1978, Maharishi asked for volunteers from around the globe to take part in the first phase of his experiment, which he called the “Ideal Society Campaign.” Thousands of TM and TM-Sidhi practitioners came forward. The plan was simple: practice in groups and see what happens in the surrounding area. Groups assembled in 20 countries, wherever possible in a single state or province.

In the United States, 300 traveled to the northeastern state of Rhode Island, and from mid-June to mid-September practiced their meditation program daily. They thought it went well, but when statistics from 1973 to 1977 (which served as a control period) were compared with 1978, the improvements in Rhode Island’s quality of life were almost unbelievable. Here are a few examples:

- The murder rate dropped by 49 percent from the same period in the previous year. It had climbed 146 percent in the first half of 1978.
- Aggravated assault dropped 22 percent.
- Car thefts were the lowest for any July to August period in the years studied.
- Suicide declined by 42 percent.
- Divorces had increased steadily since 1969, but decreased by 7.7 percent in 1978.

- Traffic fatalities, which had increased an average of 18 percent a year since 1975, dropped 54 percent.
- Even the sun got into the act: the summer of 1978 in Rhode Island was the sunniest in 30 years.<sup>15</sup>

Similar outcomes around the world prompted Maharishi to take further bold steps.

### *CALMING THE WORLD'S TROUBLE SPOTS*

In late 1978, the world was shaken by violence and war on almost every continent. Civil wars in Nicaragua and Lebanon; social upheaval in Iran that would lead to the deposing of the Shah; war in southern Africa, and other conflicts raged, bringing death, destruction, and fear. Worse still, tensions were mounting between the United States and the Soviet Union as the various regional conflicts threatened to escalate. In this atmosphere, fresh from the successes of the Ideal Society campaign, Maharishi gathered his forces and sent Yogic Flyers as peace creators to five of the most troubled areas:

- Nicaragua and surrounding countries (Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador)
- Southern Africa, especially Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Zambia
- Iran
- Israel for neighboring Lebanon and the entire

- Middle East
- Thailand

When they arrived at their destinations, the Yogic Flyers announced to the media their intention to create peace. Reporting on events in Nicaragua, Craig Pearson noted in *The Complete Book of Yogic Flying*:

The local newspaper displayed a picture of them on the front page—a large group of smiling young men wearing coats and ties. That picture was all that most people saw of them, for these were not soldiers bearing arms. They were not diplomats hoping to negotiate peace treaties. They did not meet with political or military leaders. They spoke with almost no one. They simply checked into hotels, and twice each day, practiced Yogic Flying.<sup>16</sup>

It was not quite that simple. A number of my friends who were in those peace-creating groups told me that in the first day or two before hostilities began to dissipate, as they sat meditating quietly together in their hotel meeting rooms in the midst of revolution and terror, their inner silence was punctuated by exploding bombs and the sounds of machine guns, with occasional stray bullets coming through the windows. “There were armored troop carriers in the streets, helicopters always flying overhead, and armed guards everywhere,” said one.<sup>17</sup>

Jon Levy, who went with the group to Iran, said that he knew TM had been effective in lowering the crime rate in small U.S. cities, “but this was something else. This was tanks and machine guns on one side and fanaticism and Molotov

cocktails on the other.... When we arrived [in the city of Isfahan] ... we were welcomed by the sound of the hotel closest to ours being blown up and 12 of the city's remaining banks being set aflame." But the group persisted, and within days the city began to quiet down. "The sun came out, children returned to their play in the streets, the troops were not so much in evidence, the shops reopened ... peace prevailed throughout the land. Nobody knew why. The tanks disappeared. Schools which had been closed by the violence again echoed with the cheerful voices of Iranian children."<sup>18</sup>

Media in all the areas where the groups had gone reported significant progress. Fighting decreased or stopped entirely. Anticipated attacks did not materialize. Negotiations for peace increased. In Rhodesia, after the Yogic Flyers had been there about a month, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who would subsequently become Zimbabwe's first prime minister, spoke before an assembly and said, "Peace has at last taken hold of our war-torn society."<sup>19</sup>

### *SACRIFICING PERSONAL COMFORT FOR WORLD PEACE*

When these temporary, short-term interventions of a few months' duration ended late in 1978 (because funds to support the groups had run out), Maharishi called for volunteers to establish a large, permanent "coherence creating group" to produce an ongoing influence of peace for the United States—the most powerful and influential country on the planet. Hundreds of people, mostly from large metropolitan areas such as New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay area, left homes, jobs, and extended families and moved to Fairfield, a remote town

in south-central Iowa, where Maharishi's new university was being established. There, these urban and suburban dwellers took on the challenges of making a living and raising a family in what had been a farming community, in order to participate in a program to enliven Natural Law and create a coherent, evolutionary atmosphere. Most of these people, out of a sincere desire to contribute to world peace and a better society, sacrificed a lot to make this move.

It took a while for a substantial group to get established. Going by the formula that the square root of one percent of the population practicing the TM and TM-Sidhi program together in a group would be required in order to produce the desired effect of "super radiance" for all of North America, it was determined, based on the population at the time, that 1500 people practicing together every day were needed.

All through the '80s, the group would reach the desired number and then fall back, during summer vacations at the university when the student population shrank, or when the bitter Iowa winters made the trek to the meditation domes a heroic journey. And of course, as the U.S. population increased, the required number of participants also increased. When the community reached the necessary number and was able to sustain it (with some ups and downs), the results were highly gratifying.

Here is the front-page headline of the *Los Angeles Times* on September 14, 2010, almost exactly 20 years from the time 1,600 people began meditating together regularly in the center of the country:

**FBI reports 5% drop in crime rate**

**The numbers, continuing a 20-year trend, defy expectations of higher crime during a period of economic problems.**

The nation's crime rate dropped 5% last year, continuing a 20-year trend that has cut the incidence of major crimes nearly in half, according to FBI statistics.

It was a major news story nationwide. *Time* magazine noted that 20 years before, crime was “one of the biggest, toughest problems facing the country,” and “many experts despaired of solutions. By 1991, the murder rate in the U.S. reached a near record.” But then, suddenly, there was “a breakthrough. Crime rates started falling,” and “continued to drop through boom times and recessions, through peace and war, under Democrats and Republicans.”

The human dimension of this turnaround, the author wrote, “is extraordinary.” If the crime rate had remained unchanged from 1991 levels, 170,000 more Americans would have been murdered between 1992 and 2009, more lives than were lost in combat in World War I, the Korean war, Vietnam, and Iraq *combined*. In just one year, 2008, the reduced crime rate resulted in “40,000 fewer rapes, 380,000 fewer robberies, half a million fewer aggravated assaults and 1.6 million fewer burglaries.” Then the author states, “There’s a catch, though. No one can convincingly explain exactly how the crime problem was solved.”<sup>20</sup>

From what we have considered so far, I think you may have some idea.

*THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE PROJECT*



By the early '80s, it was clear that relatively small numbers of people practicing the TM and TM-Sidhi program together could go to a troubled area and produce an effect of positivity and social cohesion by meditating together in the same time and place. Yet scientifically speaking, as mentioned above, all the studies of this effect were *retrospective*—World Peace Assemblies had been held, in various places and for various reasons, and later on, researchers had gathered data to see what the effect had been. Scientists definitely prefer a *prospective* study, an experiment that researchers plan, predict the results they expect, and then carry out to see if the results are what they anticipated.

In early 1983, Charles Alexander and David Orme-Johnson carefully designed an experiment to test the efficacy of the Maharishi Effect in a major world hotspot: the ongoing civil war in Lebanon. Because there were already a large number of meditators and TM-Sidhi practitioners in Israel, the experimental group assembled in Jerusalem, close enough to neighboring Lebanon to influence the population there as well as in Israel. The “Super Radiance” number, the number needed to create the desired effect, was 200.

The assembly (which was named the International Peace Project) began on August 1 and continued until the end of September. Before it got under way, the researchers communicated their hypothesis and the data they expected to find to independent scientists in both Israel and the United States. They would be looking at war deaths and injuries in the Lebanese war, but also at crime in Jerusalem and in Israel as a whole, automobile accidents and fires in Jerusalem, and several other parameters that would allow them to gauge quality of life and national mood.

What seemed like an insurmountable difficulty arose when the number of people participating began to fluctuate wildly, due to summer vacations ending, school terms starting, and Jewish New Year celebrations. At one time, the number of Yogic Flyers dropped to 65, far from the needed 200, and at a high point, it reached 241. But the researchers turned this into an opportunity: they would now have not just *one* experiment, but *several*, in which to compare the difference between a time period lacking the needed number, and a period in which the Maharishi Effect could be in operation.

When the data were analyzed, the results were unambiguous. When the number of participants in the assembly was highest, war deaths in Lebanon decreased by 76 percent compared to when the numbers were lowest. Quality-of-life figures varied in tandem: when the numbers went up, the Lebanon war intensity (as measured by content analysis of local newspapers by independent researchers with no knowledge of the experiment) went down, automobile accidents and fires decreased, and the Israeli stock market went up, indicating an upbeat national mood. Most important, war deaths during the two weeks when the numbers were highest averaged 1.5 per day, as opposed to more than 20 per day the rest of the time.<sup>21</sup>

Over the following decade, research appeared from around the world showing positive results when Vedic experts gathered to practice the TM and TM-Sidhi program together in groups. Among more than a dozen studies were these:

**New Delhi, India.** Crime rate dropped 11 percent from the pre-intervention period during a Vedic Science assembly

from November 1980 to April 1981, attended by up to 4,000 people.<sup>22</sup>

**Metro Manila, Philippines.** A group of about 300 Yogic Flyers, the square root of one percent of the population of Manila, were in the Philippines from August 1984 to January 1985 to teach TM in rehabilitation and educational settings. During their stay, crime decreased in the city by 12.1 percent.<sup>23</sup>

**Merseyside, England.** A group of sufficient size to create the Maharishi Effect was established in 1988 in metropolitan Merseyside in northern England. Crime rate fell by 16 percent over the following 3.5 years, while during the same period, crime in the rest of England and Wales increased by 20 percent. Merseyside shifted from having the third highest crime rate of the 11 largest metropolitan areas in the UK to having the second *lowest*. According to lead researcher Guy Hatchard, Ph.D., there were 17,000 fewer crimes than expected, compared with the trend of increasing crime in the rest of the UK, saving the government between £850 million and £1 billion.<sup>24</sup>

#### *WASHINGTON, D.C., DEMONSTRATION PROJECT*

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, out-of-control criminal behavior in Washington, D.C., had given the city the dubious nickname “the murder capital of the world.” In response, John Hagelin, the quantum physicist who had been working closely with Maharishi for many years, undertook to organize a “demonstration project” that would definitively show how powerful the Super Radiance groups could be.

An assembly was announced, and delegates who were experts in the TM and TM-Sidhi program were invited from all around the world, to arrive at the beginning of June, 1993, and continue until the end of July, spending several hours, morning and afternoon, practicing meditation and Yogic Flying. A careful research protocol was designed in collaboration with a 24-member team of scientists, to measure the effects of the assembly on life in the city. This Project Review Board included prominent sociologists and criminologists from more than half a dozen universities, as well as the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department.

When the goals of the assembly were decided upon, the administrators and research team put themselves out on a limb by publicly committing to them, communicating their intentions to 1,900 points in Washington, including all U.S. senators and members of the House of Representatives, members of the diplomatic corps, and 375 media outlets. The predicted results of the program were:

- A reduction of violent crime by 20 percent
- Improvement in specific measures of quality of life in the city
- An increase in government effectiveness, as reflected in public approval for the President

Knowing that crime in Washington was always worse in the heat of the summer when temperatures typically soared into the 90s or higher (crime had increased an average of 11 percent during the summer months every year since 1987), one member of the D.C. police department quipped that in

order for a 20 percent reduction in crime to occur, “We’ll have to have 20 inches of snow to keep people off the streets!”

The assembly began on June 7 with 700 participants, and steadily increased in size as people from 82 countries arrived to join the group. In the first week of July, with 2,200 Vedic experts meeting twice a day in Washington, President Clinton traveled to Tokyo for a Group of Seven economic summit. A former governor with no experience in international affairs, he emerged as the leader. *The Washington Post* called him “the most powerful individual there,” “the confident center of attention.” By the end of the demonstration project, Clinton’s approval rating, which had stood at 36 percent before the assembly began (an all-time low for a first-year President), had risen to 46 percent and kept climbing. Media coverage of the administration shifted from highly critical to positive.

*Washington Post* columnist Sally Quinn commented: “The Clinton administration appears to have revived.... But such a swift reversal of political fortune is not easy to account for. We may logically wonder whether Clinton really turned things around or if something else is going on.”<sup>25</sup>

Quality of life in the District of Columbia improved, as measured by the factors previously agreed upon, including reductions in emergency psychiatric calls, complaints against the police, hospital trauma cases involving car crashes, wounds from assault, and deaths due to other types of accidents.

Most impressive of all, despite record high temperatures, the decrease in violent crime surpassed the predicted 20 percent,

reaching 23 percent when participation in the assembly climbed to just under 4,000.

The statistical analysis showed that the odds of such a large decrease in violent crime occurring by chance were *less than two in a billion*. In the social sciences, a result is considered “significant” if the odds of its happening by chance are 1 in 20 ( $p=0.05$ ). If the odds are less than 1 in 100 ( $p<0.01$ ), it is referred to as “highly significant.” A probability of less than two in a billion is simply unprecedented.

As you can see in Figure 15-2, as the number of participants increased, crime declined in almost a mirror image.

### REDUCED VIOLENT CRIME IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

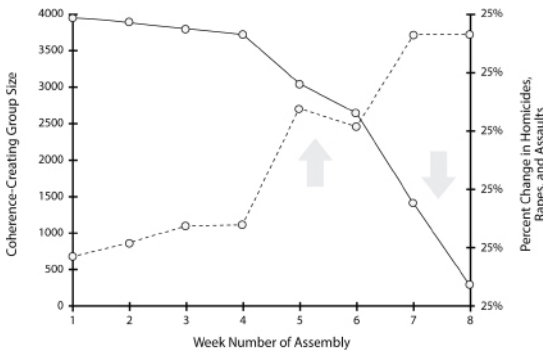


Figure 15-2

A large assembly of Yogic Flyers from 82 countries produced a reduction in violent crime in Washington, D.C. As the number of participants in the assembly (dotted line) increased

from 700 to 4,000, the amount of crime (solid line) decreased by 23 percent.

The research was published in *Social Indicators Research*, a leading journal on measures of quality of life.<sup>26</sup> One of the co-authors was a member of the D.C. police department, no longer skeptical. Experts who had served on the Project Review Board expressed enthusiasm about the results. Typical was the comment by Anne Hughes, Ph.D., a professor of sociology and government at the University of the District of Columbia (and not a practitioner of TM), who said, “What we are really looking at here is a new paradigm of viewing crime and violence.... The Demonstration Project in D.C., as well as the demonstrations elsewhere, hold promise for assisting with society’s problems. To a skeptic, I would say, ‘What is *your* solution?’ I haven’t seen one yet.”<sup>27</sup>

### *EXPANDING THE PARADIGM*

You won’t be surprised to hear that when the earliest researchers on the Maharishi Effect tried to place their papers in scientific journals, they were greeted with less-than-open arms. Worldviews and paradigms change slowly. But they *do* change.

Dr. Raymond Russ, professor of psychology at the University of Maine and editor of the *Journal of Mind and Behavior*, was one of the first editors to have a paper on the Maharishi Effect submitted to his journal. “On the one hand, the paper was based on an extremely unconventional idea,” he said. “The hypothesis definitely raised some eyebrows among our reviewers. On the other hand, this idea was backed up by rigorous statistical analysis, a level of mathematical

sophistication rarely seen in psychological or sociological studies.”

Russ distributed the paper for review to more experts than usual, and when the reports came back positive, he decided to publish. “Judging new ideas in any scientific field is an extremely delicate task,” he said. “You never want to propound errors, but you need to keep the field open for innovation and progress.”<sup>28</sup>

Soon other prominent journals began accepting papers on the Maharishi Effect as well. A new idea, a new understanding, was entering the world’s collective consciousness.

#### EXPERTS SPEAK OUT ON THE MAHARISHI EFFECT

*“I think the claim can be plausibly made that the potential impact of this research exceeds that of any other ongoing social or psychological research program. It has survived a broader array of statistical tests than most research in the field of conflict resolution. This work and the theory that informs it deserve the most serious consideration by academics and policy makers alike.”*

— **DAVID EDWARDS, PH.D.**, PROFESSOR OF GOVERNMENT, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, AUSTIN. DR. EDWARDS IS ONE OF AMERICA’S FOREMOST POLITICAL SCIENTISTS.

*“I have been following the research on the Maharishi Effect as it has developed over the last twenty years. There is now a strong and coherent body of evidence showing that this innovative approach provides a simple and cost-effective*



*solution to many of the social problems we face today. This research and its conclusions are so strong, that it demands action from those responsible for government policy.”*

— **HUW DIXON, PH.D.**, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS,  
UNIVERSITY OF YORK, ENGLAND

*“IT TAKES A NEW SEED TO YIELD A NEW CROP”*

In 1974, my publisher had arranged a promotional tour for me, to begin in mid-January 1975. In the eight years since I had first heard Maharishi speak, I had witnessed and participated in what was turning out to be a phenomenon of historic significance. I felt very privileged and proud to be part of it, and had been looking forward to the trip so that I could share with others my understanding of the value of TM and the research demonstrating its significance for human life.

It was then, as I was gearing up to leave, that Maharishi announced, on January 12: “Through the window of science, we see the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment.” The air around him was vibrant with excitement, and I had the inclination to cancel the tour and stay in Switzerland at the international headquarters. But when I told him that the tour was to begin in a few days and asked if he thought I should go, he replied with no hesitation, “Of course, yes!”

The day before the scheduled departure, I had another question: Was there any particular message he would like me to convey to the thousands, and possibly millions, of people (via radio and TV appearances) I’d be speaking to as I traveled around North America? Training courses were in

session at various sites near our headquarters on the shore of Lake Lucerne, and that day it was his agenda to visit several of them, to answer questions and offer additional instructions. I didn't ask if I could come along, but somehow there was always room in his usually full car as he was driven from place to place. We didn't speak all day; Maharishi was constantly busy with various teaching and organizational matters.

At night, after the last meeting, I walked with him back to his rooms, where he then proceeded to meet one-to-one with several people. Again I was there, sitting at the side of the room, a silent witness. Finally, the last person's questions were resolved. He looked over at me and said, "Now go and rest." We both stood up. He walked to a large vase of flowers on a table and with a quick, deft motion plucked out a tall stalk of a flower I had never seen, something like a gladiolus but thinner and very much like a long red sword. With another swift, strong motion, holding it upright, he thrust it out to me. I took it, and for the long moment that both our hands were on the stalk, our eyes met and held. No words were spoken.


On the plane over the Atlantic, I realized with both shock and amusement that I was going to be the first person in the United States, and one of the very first in the world, to step out in public and talk about the Age of Enlightenment. How would people take it? Everyone knew the world was filled with problems. Would they think we were deluded to proclaim something so far-fetched? I decided to start my talks by bringing up that very question, and asking my audience to suspend their disbelief for an hour and just listen to the evidence.

So I talked about the physiological and psychological research which, although still in its early stages, had already demonstrated some exceptional benefits. I spoke of the first one percent study on reduced crime in a few American cities, and Maharishi's reaction to it—that it was sufficient evidence to be able to see tremendous possibilities for a world of health, harmony, and peace. And people listened.

It seemed to me that when they heard this message, something inside them woke up. Everyone not only deeply wanted this to be true, they also *knew* it to be true. Somewhere inside, in their hearts, their souls—somewhere and somehow—the Age of Enlightenment, like the sun that stands always behind the clouds ready to bathe us all in warmth and light, was already a reality, and it came to life and resonated joyfully with Maharishi's vision. By spreading this message far and wide, he was not merely lifting people's spirits with hope for a better world, he was also planting thought-seeds that would sprout *into* that world. As he had said, "It takes a new seed to yield a new crop."

In the generations before mine, growing up amidst world war and global depression, only a very few could resonate with the message that life is bliss in its essential nature. It was contrary to all evidence! Today, there are millions of people who *know* this in their bones, the way 12-year-olds know how to work all the technology that requires such effort for the older generations to master. They innocently and easily hold the vision of a just and peaceful world, and contribute as much as they can of their time, energy, and resources toward bringing that vision to birth.

The seeds are sprouting.



A few years after that lecture tour, the trajectory of my life took me away from active participation in Maharishi's movement. I continued my own meditation practice, kept up on some of the research and international developments, and almost every year, taught a few people to meditate. I knew about some of the "interventions" described in this chapter, when a group was assembled to reduce environmental stress and conflict, and even attended the demonstration project in Washington, D. C., in 1993. Yet I must admit that I didn't realize how effective these efforts had been until I began working on the revised version of this book, and reading the research papers about them.

Then, in January 2012, I came across three books, two of them published in the last months of 2011, that changed everything.

### *WORDS INTO PLOWSHARES*

Like the research we have been considering in this chapter, the theme of all three books—written by respected scholars with no connection to TM—is that we now have a very real chance to put an end to war. In fact, as I'll discuss in just a moment, these researchers suggest that it is already happening. If this is true, the implications for human life—for all life on the planet—are enormous.

Like many lovers of peace through the ages, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, has often pointed out that if we could eliminate war from the repertoire of acceptable human behavior, "the immense financial dividend from the cessation

of arms production would provide a fantastic windfall for global development.” In addition to “the awesome proportion of scarce resources squandered,” military activity requires “the sacrifice of precious human intelligence.” The world’s scientists, he noted, “are extremely bright. Why should their brilliance be wasted on such dreadful endeavors [as weapons of war] when it could be used for positive global development?”<sup>29</sup>

These heartfelt words from the Dalai Lama were written 40 years after other passionate words from one of the greatest military leaders in U.S. history. Dwight Eisenhower was not only the 34th President of the United States; before that, he’d been a five-star general and served in World War II as Supreme Commander of all Allied forces in Europe. More than most people who have ever lived, he knew the devastating effects of war, and preparations for war.

In a 1953 speech given shortly after assuming the office of President, he said he felt the need to “speak of that issue that comes first in the hearts and minds of all of us—that issue which most urgently challenges and summons the wisdom and the courage of our whole people. This issue is peace.” Speaking to all of us and *for* all of us, President Eisenhower said: “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.... Is there no other way the world may live?”<sup>30</sup>

The main point of this book, and of Maharishi's work in the world for half a century, is that there *is* another way for the world to live. And it is starting to happen.

The three researchers I mentioned above have been discovering that war and violence are declining. With copious charts, graphs, and statistics, they've each made a persuasive argument that the entire world is enjoying decreasing violence, less death from war, and a definite trend toward peace.

“Believe it or not,” said Steven Pinker, professor of psychology at Harvard and author of *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, despite what the media present to us every day, “we may be living in the most peaceful time in our species' existence.... What may be the most important thing that has ever happened in human history is that violence has gone down, by dramatic degrees, and in many dimensions all over the world and in many spheres of behavior.”<sup>31</sup>

John Mueller, a professor of political science at Ohio State University and author of *Remnants of War*, has been chronicling the decline of war for decades. “We may be reaching a point where war—in both its international and civil varieties—ceases, or nearly ceases, to exist, a remarkable development that has attracted little notice.”<sup>32</sup>

War, in Mueller's view, “is merely an idea, an institution, like dueling or slavery, that has been grafted onto human existence.” In other words, there is nothing inevitable or necessary about it. “And it seems to me that the institution is in pronounced decline ... roughly following the pattern by

which the ancient and formidable institution of slavery became discredited and then mostly obsolete.”<sup>33</sup>

I have a clear recollection of sitting in a meeting with Maharishi sometime in the 1970s, when he forecast what he saw happening in the future as the number of meditators increased, with a consequent upsurge of purity and coherence in the world’s atmosphere. First, he said, the biggest conflicts would cease. The superpowers (the United States and the Soviet Union) would end hostilities and gradually become more friendly to each other. That happened in 1991, with the peaceful—and completely unexpected—collapse of the Soviet Union and the resultant end of the Cold War.

A substantial amount of negativity would still remain in the environment and the collective consciousness of the world, Maharishi said, and it would find its outlet and expression in smaller-scale wars and conflicts. Eventually, as global stress continued to dissolve, the remaining conflicts would be more like bands of criminals and gangs fighting with each other.

This is precisely the pattern Mueller describes in *Remnants of War*. Wars between sovereign states, he says, have become infrequent and relatively limited in scope and duration, and wars between the world’s great powers “have not occurred for more than fifty years. The number of civil wars is also shrinking.... This tremendous progress goes unheralded for the most part, as people’s attention and media coverage gravitate toward the remaining trouble spots.”<sup>34</sup>

In a book published in late 2011, *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide*, a third scholar offers a profoundly optimistic view of the trend toward peace.

Joshua S. Goldstein, professor emeritus of international relations at American University in Washington, D.C., points out that in the first half of the 20th century, “world wars killed tens of millions and left whole continents in ruins.” In the second half of that century, wars killed millions, “and the world feared a nuclear war that could have wiped out our species.”

Now, the worst wars, such as those in Iraq and Sudan, kill hundreds of thousands, and the first decade of the 21st century “has seen fewer war deaths than any decade in the past 100 years.” Rather than fearing annihilation, “we now fear terrorist attacks that could destroy a city, but not life on the planet.”<sup>35</sup>

This decline in war violence corresponds directly with the increased number of people in the U.S. and around the world meditating and practicing Yogic Flying. “Wars today are measurably fewer and smaller than thirty years ago,” says Goldstein. Thirty years ago, in the early 1980s, is when attendance in the ongoing World Peace Assembly in Fairfield, Iowa, fluctuated around the level needed to produce the Maharishi Effect. “By one measure,” Goldstein says, “the number of people killed directly by war violence has decreased by 75 percent in that period.”

Even more dramatic, he states, is the sharp drop in war violence and death, and the equally sharp increase in the effectiveness of international mediation and peacekeeping work that began in 1991. In that year, the Super Radiance numbers stabilized at the requisite level to produce the Maharishi Effect—and the Soviet Union dissolved. The 20



years since the Cold War ended, says Goldstein, have been “an era of rapid progress toward peace.”

“The overall peaceful trend since 1990,” he says, “may be a harbinger of even greater peace, or just an interlude before new and more terrible wars. It may be robust or fragile. It may result from understandable causes or from an unknown confluence of events. But for now, peace is increasing. Year by year, we are winning the war on war.”<sup>36</sup>

Is this what Maharishi was seeing in his mind’s eye on that day in India when he said there was something we could do about the lack of peace in the world?

Could we be living at the beginning of the age envisioned thousands of years ago by the prophet Isaiah—a time longed for by millions of people, when “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”<sup>37</sup>

Is it merely wishful thinking, or can we believe the words of Mairead Maguire, winner of the 1976 Nobel Peace prize for her work in Northern Ireland: “A new dawn, a new age of civilization is coming. It will be an age of solidarity, where each person is dedicated to ‘protective love’ for each other and for our world. It will be an age of nonviolent evolution where we solve our problems by peaceful means, not by violence, war or nuclear weapons.”<sup>38</sup>

Or as Indian author and activist Arundhati Roy said, “Another world is not only possible, she’s on her way. And on a quiet day, if you listen carefully, you can hear her breathe.”<sup>39</sup>

## WORDS ON WAR AND PEACE

*“While we spend much of our time and a great deal of our treasure in preparing for war, we see no comparable effort to establish a lasting peace. Meanwhile, those advocates who work for world peace ... are called impractical dreamers. Those impractical dreamers are entitled to ask their critics: ‘What is so practical about war?’”<sup>40</sup>*

— **WALTER CRONKITE**

*“The first peace, which is most important, is that which comes from within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells the great spirit, and that this center is really everywhere—it is within each of us.”<sup>41</sup>*

— **BLACK ELK, OGLALA SIOUX MEDICINE MAN**

*“Peace—the word evokes the simplest and most cherished dream of humanity. Peace is, and has always been, the ultimate human aspiration.”<sup>42</sup>*

— **JAVIER PÉREZ DE CUÉLLAR, FORMER SECRETARYGENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

*“I know war as few other men now living know it, and nothing to me is more revolting. I have long advocated its complete abolition.”<sup>43</sup>*

— **GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR**

## *THE WORLD IS MY FAMILY*

Peace in the world, and an enlightened family of nations living harmoniously together, is what Maharishi tirelessly worked for, over more than half a century. He had a vision of the kind of world human beings ought to live in, a world governed not by people who want to rule and control for the benefit of themselves and their friends, but rather, a society and a world guided by Natural Law, the cosmic intelligence of nature.

His intentions were clear from the start. “Our purpose, our sole purpose,” he told a TV reporter in Austria in 1962, “is to bring more peace, more happiness, more energy, and more creativity to every man all over the world.” A few years later he added, “Our goal is laudable. We want to bring the light of life, the light of God, to everyone.”

Bringing that light, he knew, would result in a different kind of world, and sometimes he shared his vision with those around him. He must have written and spoken about it hundreds of times over the years, but he never seemed to tire of expressing it, always in fresh language, as if discovering it for the first time. Probably he felt that declaring it would nurture its creation.

What will that world look like?

The details are impossible to predict. All around the globe, different peoples with different needs and concerns will discover principles and create systems and ways of living appropriate for them, based on higher awareness and a deep grasp of Natural Law. But it will surely be a world in which

all beings on Earth live together harmoniously, a world dominated not by fear and division, as is so common today, but by kindness, generosity, and mutual support—in a word, by love.

“Positive, nourishing, harmonious trends will prevail,” Maharishi said. “The whole world’s population will be an enlightened family of nations.”

Spontaneously everyone will genuinely feel, “The world is my family.” All the countries in the world, with their diverse cultures, languages, religions, and administrative systems will be a beautiful mosaic of differences. An ideal, united family of nations will blossom. Ever-refreshing waves of brilliance and enlightenment will prevail....<sup>44</sup>

Life will be long and happy. Fear and punishment in the administration of society will be forgotten; in gentleness and love, the life of mankind will be restored to wholeness. Spontaneously living in alliance with the invincible power of Natural Law, every nation will enjoy victory before war. Each step of progress of the individual and the nation will be guided by the unseen hand of nature’s perfect intelligence and infinite organizing power. Abundance and affluence will belong to all.<sup>45</sup>



For those of us who have met Maharishi, who have felt and seen the effects of Transcendental Meditation, and who have watched or participated, even for a few years, in the unfolding and expansion of his worldwide movement, there can be no

doubt that his vision of an enlightened, harmonious world will one day be the reality of life on Earth.

Of course, this vision is not new, nor uniquely Maharishi's. It belongs to all of us. But for centuries it has remained a vision. The research we have considered in these pages, and the experiences of hundreds of thousands of people on every continent, indicate that we now have the means to breathe life into it by fully developing our potential for experience and action.

“Transcendental meditation in its pure form will help people at all times to alleviate suffering and to remove shortcomings and ignorance,” Maharishi wrote, bringing to a close his first book, *Science of Being and Art of Living*. “It will usher in a new humanity developed in all life's values—physical, mental, material and spiritual—and enable man to live a life of fulfillment.... The peace and prosperity of people everywhere will be secured. Higher consciousness will guide the destiny of man. All will be established in the true values of life. Accomplishments will be great in the family, the society, the nation and the world. And man will live naturally in fulfillment, generation after generation.”<sup>46</sup>





## RESOURCES

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### *WHERE TO LEARN THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION TECHNIQUE*

TM is taught throughout the world. Many cities have a local center, with its own contact information (listed under “Transcendental Meditation”) but most countries have a central phone number and website that will answer questions and/or direct you to a center in your area. Here are a few of the national contacts for English-speaking countries:

- USA: [tm.org](http://tm.org), 1-888-learntm (1-888-532-7686)
- UK: [t-m.org.uk/](http://t-m.org.uk/), 01695 51213
- Canada: [maharishi.ca](http://maharishi.ca), phone listings for all provinces at website
- South Africa: [info@tm-online.org.za](mailto:info@tm-online.org.za), (011) 728 0959
- Australia: [tm.org.au](http://tm.org.au), 1300 886 397
- New Zealand: [tm.org.nz](http://tm.org.nz)
- India: [maharishi-india.org](http://maharishi-india.org), [india@maharishi.net](mailto:india@maharishi.net), 0120-4562 259
- Ireland: [tm-ireland.org](http://tm-ireland.org)

Most of the above sites have listings of local teachers and/or direct access links to them.

For non-English-language countries, search for TM in your language—that is, “Meditacion Trascendental” or “La Tecnica de Meditacion Trascendental” in Spanish-speaking countries; “Meditation Transcendental” in French; “Transzendente Meditation” in German; and so on. The website for information in Japan is: [maharishi.co.jp](http://maharishi.co.jp).

### *EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS*

You can find information and contact some of the educational institutions that offer consciousness-based education here:

- USA: Maharishi University of Management, [mum.edu](http://mum.edu)
- USA: Maharishi School, [maharishischooliowa.org](http://maharishischooliowa.org)
- UK: Maharishi School, [maharishischool.com](http://maharishischool.com)
- India: Maharishi Schools (Maharishi Vidya Mandir), [maharishividyamandir.com](http://maharishividyamandir.com)
- South Africa: Consciousness Based Education, [cbesa.org](http://cbesa.org) or [info@cbesa.org](mailto:info@cbesa.org)
- Australia (Melbourne): [Office@MaharishiSchool.vic.edu.au](mailto:Office@MaharishiSchool.vic.edu.au)

*FOR SCIENTIFIC PAPERS, SUMMARIES,  
LINKS, AND EXPLANATIONS*



**Original Papers:** Six volumes of an ongoing series, *Scientific Research on the Transcendental Meditation Program*, are now available, containing the full text of 524 studies on TM in 4,500 pages. These books are rather expensive; you might try a university library or an interlibrary loan, or you can purchase them at [www.mumpress.com/books/scientific-research.html](http://www.mumpress.com/books/scientific-research.html).

An annotated bibliography briefly summarizing 503 of the papers is downloadable (free) in a PDF format (800 KB) at [www.truthabouttm.org/utility/showDocumentFile/?objectID=61](http://www.truthabouttm.org/utility/showDocumentFile/?objectID=61).

For other research summaries and links to many of the original papers:

- [tm.org/research-on-tm](http://tm.org/research-on-tm)
- [mum.edu/research](http://mum.edu/research)
- [truthabouttm.org](http://truthabouttm.org)

You can find original scientific research by entering the full title of the paper (and perhaps the primary author) in your search engine. Google Scholar is also an excellent way to find the papers.

#### *BOOKS BY MAHARISHI*

The following are widely available in stores and online in various editions:

- *Science of Being and Art of Living*

- *Maharishi Mahesh Yogi on the Bhagavad Gita*

More than a dozen additional books by Maharishi can be obtained at [www.mumpress.com/books/maharishi.html](http://www.mumpress.com/books/maharishi.html).

A sampling of books by other authors:

- *The Complete Book of Yogic Flying*, by Craig Pearson, Ph.D.
- *Permanent Peace: How to Stop Terrorism and War, Now and Forever*, by Robert Oates
- *Conversations with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, by Vernon Katz, Ph.D.
- *Transcendence: Healing and Transformation Through TM*, by Norman Rosenthal, M.D.
- *Total Heart Health*, by Robert Schneider, M.D.
- *The Physiology of Consciousness*, by Robert Keith Wallace, Ph.D.
- *The Neurophysiology of Enlightenment*, by Robert Keith Wallace, Ph.D.
- *The Flow of Consciousness*, lectures by Maharishi on literature, compiled and annotated by Rhoda Orme-Johnson, Ph.D.
- *Manual for a Perfect Government*, by John Hagelin, Ph.D.

- *Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation*, by Robert Roth

- *Catching the Big Fish*, by David Lynch





## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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### Introduction

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2. I will be discussing these papers and citing references in [Chapter 5](#).

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**Jack Forem** was one of the first 200 people trained by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi to teach Transcendental Meditation. Following his studies in India in 1970, Forem quickly became a leader of the TM movement worldwide. He served as Director of the New York Center of the International Meditation Society, worked on Maharishi's international staff, and assisted in training new teachers of TM in various training courses in Switzerland, Belgium, and France.

As a teacher, Forem has been involved in the human potential movement for four decades, leading courses and seminars on consciousness, creativity, and spiritual development in the U.S. and abroad. He has instructed thousands of individuals in meditation in schools, universities, and corporate settings. As a writer, he has authored, co-authored, or ghost-written articles and nearly a dozen books on leadership, natural healing, and the relationship of science and spirituality.

*Transcendental Meditation* was Jack Forem's first book. This revised and updated version reflects the enormous growth in the TM movement worldwide since the first edition, and hundreds of published scientific studies of TM's benefits.



## NOTES

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